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EDITORIAL

The editors of NUMEN are pleased to announce that the publisher BRILL has accepted their proposal to heighten NUMEN's presence in the international academic community by increasing the number of issues published each year. Commencing with the first issue in 1993 NUMEN will be published three times a year instead of twice yearly and its size will increase from 288 to 336 pages. The three fascicles will be issued in January, May and September.

Increasing the number of issues per year is an indication of a heightened interest among scholars throughout the world in grasping the opportunity that NUMEN provides as an international forum for analysing and discussing the major religious issues facing the contemporary scholarly study of religion. BRILL's decision to support the editor's recommendation fosters their aim to encourage this development.

HANS G. KIPPENBERG / E. THOMAS LAWSON

MANICHAEISM IN THE EARLY SASANIAN EMPIRE

MANFRED HUTTER

Summary

It is well-known that Mani knew Christian Gnosticism, Zoroastrianism and also a little of Buddhism and used different items from these religions. As we can see from the Šābuhragān, the central themes of Mani's teachings at the Sasanian court were the "two principles" and the "three times", but he reworked them and brought them close to Zurwanism, because King Šābuhr did not favour 'orthodox' Zoroastrianism but 'heretical' Zurwanism. Thus Manichaeism could flourish for thirty years within the Sasanian empire. After Šābuhr's death the Zoroastrian priest Kirdir gained influence at the court, thus Manichaeism—and Zurwanism—met restrictions which finally led to Mani's death. In consequence Manichaeism and Zurwanism, which always favoured universalism, were put aside in order to establish Zoroastrianism as a nationalistic religion in Iran.

1. Mani—the interpreter of religion

It is a well-known fact that the Manichaean religion depends on many different roots:¹ Mani himself was born into an Iranian family, but at the age of four his father took him to the religious community of the Elchasaites as has become apparent from the publication of the famous Manichaean Codex from Cologne. The location of the Elchasaites in South Mesopotamia bears its influence on Mani because South Mesopotamia was at that time the crossroads of religious thought between the West and the East. On the other hand when Mani had grown up he went to north west India where he encountered Buddhism. Therefore Mani knew Christian Gnosticism, Zoroastrianism and also a little of Buddhism which enabled him to use different items from these religions for his preaching and his interpretation of the former religions. A Manichaean text puts it thus:² "Great noble Maitreya, messenger of the gods, grea[est]³ among the interpreters of Religion, Jesus—Maiden of Light, Mār Mani, have mercy on me." The epitheta given to Mani in this text clearly relate to Buddhism (cf. *mytr*), Zoroastrianism (cf. *yzdⁿ*), and Syrian Christianity (cf. *yyšw*). The apostle of light, Mani, is the interpreter of the former religions (*dyn ū pŷšyngⁿ*) and he himself brings the best religion to the world,

because “the former religions (existed) as long as they had the pure leaders, but when the leaders had been led upwards (i.e. had died), then their religions fell into disorder and became negligent in commandments and works. ... This revelation of mine of the two principles and my living books, my wisdom and knowledge are above and better than those of the previous religions.”⁴ So Mani finally brought to perfection what all other religious leaders before him had started; the teachings of Zarathustra, Buddha, Jesus, and the other prophets were in imperfect order, but they all had some kernels of truth. This topic of sending former prophets to various peoples in various times and languages can be found very often in Manichaean scriptures. Only recently a new text of this kind became known through the publication of the Coptic texts from Dublin showing again the coming of Zarathustra to Persia, of the Buddha to India and of Jesus to the West.⁵ Mani is the legitimate successor of those prophets and the restorer of the true religion whom the god Xradešahr sent to fulfill the religions. To join the Manichaean religion is the best one can do, because Manichaeism is the only door of redemption and Xradešahr will summon all people at the end of time for the last judgement. This is evident in Mani’s Šābuhragān:⁶ “Then Xradešahr (the god of the world of Wisdom)—he who first [gave] that male creation, the original First Man, wisdom and knowledge, and (who) afterwards from time to time and from [age] to age sent wisdom and knowledge to mankind—in that last [age] also, close to the Renovation, that lord Xradešahr, together with all the gods and the religious [exiled?] ... will then stand [up?] in the [heavens].” It is Mani’s teaching that gives the clue to passing this judgement because his teaching shows the real interpretation of the older doctrines. Therefore he adopts and adapts these older doctrines in order to form an entire new religion; in the Sasanian Empire he especially takes into account the teachings of Zurwanism—with all consequences, namely the favour of Sābuhr I. for his religion and the hatred of the Zoroastrian priesthood.

2. Zoroastrian and Zurwanite Mythology and Mani’s Šābuhragān

In Ibn an-Nadīm’s Fihrist we find the following reference: “Mani wrote seven books, one of them in Persian and six in Syriac, the

language of Syria.”⁷ This Persian book, the Šābuhragān, Mani wrote for his audiences with the Sasanian king Šābuhr I., hence the title “Šābuhragān”, i.e. the book dedicated to Šābuhr. Various manuscripts of it have been preserved in the findings from the Turfan oasis now housed at Berlin and Göttingen. Already in 1904 F.W.K. Müller managed to publish some fragments from this book but it took until 1979/1980 for D.N. MacKenzie to prepare an almost entire edition and translation of “Mani’s *ipsissima vox*”.⁸ In it Mani described his eschatological teachings. This however was only half the story, because Manichaean eschatology does not work without cosmogony and anthropogony. These missing parts of Mani’s Šābuhragān have been known for a long time but have not been joined to the Šābuhragān. Recently I was able to show—following proposals by W.B. Henning, Mary Boyce, and W. Sundermann⁹—on the account of linguistic and stylistic arguments¹⁰ that the Middle Persian fragments M 98/99 I and M 7980-7984 from the Turfan collection which give a full account of cosmogony and anthropogony are, in fact, also part of Mani’s teachings composed on behalf of Šābuhr I. Therefore the contents of the Šābuhragān can be sketched as follows: The first chapter of the book deals with Mani’s forerunners as we mainly know from Arabic references, but there are no Middle Persian texts of this part available. Then we read about cosmogony and the mixture of the principles of light and darkness wherefrom the material world and mankind originated. To redeem mankind from the bondage of the darkness a saviour figure brings *gnosis* to the world. Thus all human beings can take part in salvation and can return to their divine origin. The same will happen universally when at the end of time light and darkness will be separated again and all the gods of light and the souls of men, who have attained *gnosis*, will dwell in the abodes of paradise, as we are told in the eschatological part of the Šābuhragān.¹¹

What are the main topics in Mani’s teaching in the Sasanian Empire at the court of Šābuhr?¹² The central themes are the “two principles” (*dw bwn*) of light and darkness and the “three times”, the original time when the realms of light and darkness existed side by side, with equal strength but separated by a boundary, the time of mixture after the combat between light and darkness, and finally

the time of the renewed separation of the two principles. Having this in mind we can see that Mani largely depends on Iranian religious thoughts as K. Rudolph has stressed just recently.¹³ It is everybody's task to remember the two principles and the three times and to remember that one has his own roots in the principle of light. Knowing this man has *gnosis* and because of this *gnosis* every man is obliged to fight against the principle of darkness during his whole life; Mani's ethical commandments are a proper guide for this fighting.¹⁴ Thus it is not difficult to see how Mani re-worked Zoroastrian mythology in his own cosmogonical and eschatological myth: The strong dualism is well known from Pahlavi sources and the best "parallel" account to Mani's teaching can be found in the (Greater) *Bundahišn*.¹⁵ In chapter one of this Pahlavi text which can be assigned to the late Sasanian period but certainly contains older materials we read about the primordial fight between Ohrmazd and Ahriman. Since this fight good and evil have been intermingled in the world. For every good creation which Ohrmazd had brought forth Ahriman, the Evil Spirit, made an evil counter-creation to disturb the world of light and goodness. Until the end of time, at the renovation (*frašegird*) of the Zoroastrian cosmos, evil will remain within the good creation. Only then will the demons' strength fade away and Ohrmazd together with the divine beings (*yazadān*) will dwell in his realm of truth and happiness.¹⁶

There is also another important trait in Mani's Iranian version of his teachings, namely a special Iranian style as can be seen from the names of the Manichaean gods. In an important study W. Sundermann has shown¹⁷ that in the whole Šābuhragān there are no Syrian names; all Manichaean gods bear names which show an identification with gods of the Zoroastrian pantheon even in those cases where Mani incorporates divine beings from a non-Iranian tradition: Jesus, Adam or Eve are called Xradešahr, Gēhmurd or Muriyānag. Because of this terminology Mani's teaching was able to avoid the impression of being alien to the Sasanian empire.¹⁸ Thus Mani not only adopted the terminology and the dualistic mythology of the Zoroastrians but went even farther: Whereas the Zoroastrians thought a kind of dualism which showed good and evil in the spiritual (*mēnōg*) and in the material (*gētīg*) world, Mani's

dualism was more exclusive: The material world, i.e. the realm of Ahrmen, king of darkness, is considered evil; on the other hand the spiritual world, i.e. the realm of the Father of Greatness (*zurwān*) and of the gods of light, is good. From this novel perspective Mani modified the Iranian dualism. It was not however entirely new because the dualism of light and darkness was already in his time a commonplace in gnostic thought and teaching.

What impression did this make on Šābuhr? We know from the Dēnkard that Šābuhr was interested in knowledge of any kind:¹⁹ “Šābuhr, the king of kings, son of Ardašīr, further collected the non-religious writings on medicine, astronomy, movement, time, space, substance, accident, becoming, decay, transformation, logic and other crafts and skills which were dispersed throughout India, Rome and other lands, and collated them with the Avesta and commanded that a copy be made of all those [writings] which were flawless and be deposited in the Royal Treasury. And he put forward for deliberation the annexation of all those pure [teachings] to the Mazdean religion.” This text shows that Šābuhr tried to acquire and introduce new knowledge into his empire. So we think that Mani knew that the ruler would lend his ear to the new teaching and would tolerate Mani. The reason for Šābuhr to act in this way is not absolutely clear. We may, however, suppose the following: When Mani met the ruler he stressed the fact that the Manichaean religion is nothing else than a “reform” of Zarathustra’s ancient teachings, because we have seen that Zarathustra plays—*inter alia*—a dominant role within Mani’s prophetology²⁰; Mani is a “*Zoroaster revivus*” who gives new life to the old creed. But the way in which Mani revived Zarathustra’s teachings must have been still more fascinating for Šābuhr: The king was faced with an empire consisting of various peoples of very different creeds. For all these peoples the new religion offers a common bondage: Besides the Christians who lived in Syria and Mesopotamia within the borders of the Sasanian Empire, Šābuhr’s political encounters with the Romans resulted in the deportation of many Christians to the Sasanian Empire so that the number of Christians increased.²⁰ The Šābuhragān not only shows a close connection to Iranian mythology but also gives an elaborated citation from the New Testament. On the other hand we also have to

acknowledge the general gnostic traits in Manichaeism, parts of which were not unfamiliar to the Syrian Christianity. Thus Manichaeism seemed to be the best religion for the parts of western Sasanian Iran in which Christianity prospered. An analogy can be found in Eastern Iran with its Buddhist population: Mani not only sent his pupil Mār Ammō to them but the Parthian texts which have been composed probably by Mār Ammō himself, already tried to take Buddhist terminology²¹ into account in order to make Manichaeism fitting for “Buddhist ears”. All this fits together: Just as Mani saw his religion as a perfection of all the former religions, so to speak—within the Sasanian borders—as the perfection of Zoroastrianism, Christianity, and Buddhism, Šābuhr intended to see in Manichaeism a suitable syncretistic but Iranian religion for “Greater Iran” partly related to his own Zurwanite views of Zoroastrianism. For although we read in his inscription that he brought forward the Mazdayasnian Religion we have no doubt in saying that Šābuhr did not favour ‘orthodox’ Zoroastrianism but ‘heretical’ Zurwanism. Although the king himself could not convert to Manichaeism for political reasons, Mani’s teachings were a useful tool for his imperial politics.²² Thus Manichaeism could flourish for thirty years within the Sasanian empire. Mani himself stayed in the Persis and Western Iran, where he developed a good deal of his missionary work and his church organisation.²³

3. Kirdīr—Mani’s Zoroastrian Counterpart

The situation changed after Šābuhr’s death. His son Ohrmazd still favoured Mani, but he favoured the Zoroastrian priest Kirdīr as well. This enabled Kirdīr’s religio-political career to start. After Ohrmazd’s short reign his elder brother Wahrām I. became king who held totally different religious ideals than his father Šābuhr. Very probably Kirdīr influenced the king in order to strengthen Zoroastrianism and thus to weaken Manichaeism. We know about Kirdīr’s religious efforts from his four inscriptions²⁴ and also from Manichaean texts, but it is interesting to observe that the further Zoroastrian tradition in Pahlavi—for unknown reasons—never mentions him. From these sources it can be seen that Kirdīr was

probably as old as Mani and that he began his career already under the reign of Šābuhr but did not have a prominent religious position then.²⁵ It was only Ohrmazd who made Kirdīr the “*mowbed of Ohrmazd*” and Mosig-Walburg comes to the conclusion that he was nearly absolutely free as regards religious activities from that moment on, i.e. he became the leading priest of the Sasanian state church.²⁶ But if we take into account the Manichaean materials we see that this cannot be the case because at the time of Wahrām I., when Mani was summoned to the court at Bet Lapat (i.e. Gundēšābuhr) Kirdīr was only one among a certain number of Zoroastrians who constituted the juridical court; Kirdīr alone did not have the right to put Mani to trial. Therefore it is highly improbable that he was the highest Zoroastrian priest and judge (*dēnwar* and *dastwar*).²⁷ It took until the reign of Wahrām II.—after Mani’s death—for Kirdīr to come to the climax of his religio-political career.²⁸ In those days he was given the title *buxt-ruwān-Wahrām*, he got a rank in the Sasanian nobility as we can see from Wahrām’s rock relief at Naqš-i Rustam and also from Kirdīr’s own inscriptions. From the latter ones two important facts are evident for Sasanian Zoroastrianism: Kirdīr describes his vision²⁹ through which he saw heaven and hell, and his “double” (pahl. *hngly*³⁰) being led to paradise by a young maiden, who is nobody else than the *dēn*, Kirdīr’s own conscience and the Zoroastrian religion. This visionary extraterrestrial journey to the otherworld has rightly been compared with shamanistic practices and visionary journeys but it seems too far-fetched to conclude that this vision has been modelled to react to comparable shamanistic traits of Mani himself.³¹ W. Sundermann states that Mani’s twin (*narjamīg*) can better and more easily be interpreted in terms of gnosticism and apocalypticism than within a shamanistic framework.³² But nevertheless Kirdīr’s vision gives an important insight into his Zoroastrian belief and clearly shows his “dogma”: Good or evil done in this world will be rewarded in the otherworld. The good man will reach heaven but the evil-doer will go to hell. This is a much simpler ethical and religious teaching than Mani’s sophisticated mythology of the redemption of the divine light which is in everybody’s soul and thus incarcerated in every material body. Kirdīr’s theology, which we can see in his vision and from the political power he had gained at the Sasanian court, also led to the persecution of other religions as he openly states in his inscriptions.³³ All non-Zoroastrian religions

within the Sasanian empire are mentioned, among them of course the Zandīqs, i.e. the Manichaeans, but the great persecution of Manichaeans only took place after Mani's death within the reign of Wahrām II. In conclusion we can say that Kirdīr made an astonishing career in the Sasanian court: Under Šābuhr he was a mere Zoroastrian priest of the lower hierarchy but then he steadily gained influence from the reign of Ohrmazd to the reign of Wahrām I. and II. On the other hand Mani lost—after his success during Šābuhr's reign—increasingly his influence until his death under Wahrām I.

About Mani's last days the Manichaean texts give the following picture: When he arrived at Bet Lapat he was not welcomed by Wahrām at the court as we read in M 3, a Middle Persian text.³⁴ Wahrām questions the need of men like Mani who neither go hunting nor fishing nor give healing to sick people. Mani replies that he had already freed many of Wahrām's servants from demons and witches and had removed fever from them. But nevertheless Wahrām put him to prison to please the Magians—thus we read in the Coptic Psalm-Book.³⁵ “The lover of fighting, the peaceless one, roared in flaming anger, he commanded them to fetter the righteous one that he might please the Magians, the teacher of Persia, the servants of fire. This is the way that they gave judgement upon the victor, the angel, the Paraclete.” But we have another important source about Mani's encounter with Wahrām: in the Coptic homilies³⁶ Wahrām questions why Mani has received this divine knowledge rather than the king. Mani's answer was that it was the choice of the gods to reveal their knowledge and truth to whosoever they may wish. Gods do not care for political hierarchies. This answer finally shows the ideological differences between Mani and Wahrām: The Zoroastrian ruler being invested by Ahura Mazdā (Ohrmazd) cannot bear a rival like Mani, who has closer connections to god than the king. Thus there is no longer any common bond between Mani's teaching and Wahrām's politico-religious theology. Wahrām's theology neatly runs in these lines which we also read in the “Testament of Ardašīr”:³⁷ “Know that kingship and religion are twin brothers, no one of which can be maintained without the other. For religion is the foundation of kingship, and kingship is the guardian or religion. Kingship cannot subsist without its foundation, and religion cannot subsist without its guardian.”—In Sasanian Iran the religious leader had to be at

the side of the political leaders. This was the case with Mani and Šābuhr, with Kirdīr and Ohrmazd, Wahrām I. and II., but not with Mani and these later kings. Mani's death in prison—his return to the Realm of Light, as Manichaean texts put it—was thus only the logical consequence of his political interference in the early Sasanian history.

4. Manichaeism, Zurwanism, and Zoroastrianism in the Early Sasanian Period

One problem within the history of Iranian religions is the question of the relationship between Zoroastrianism and Zurwanism. After having analysed Mani's own contribution to the religions in the Sasanian empire we think that we can also offer some insight into trends in this religious history. Mary Boyce who certainly knows the material best argues that in the early Sasanian empire Zurwanism was the leading religion favoured by the kings besides the “orthodox” Zoroastrianism.³⁸ But a great number of Iranists, even if they acknowledge the importance of Zurwanism, hold the opposite to be true. Thus Gh. Gnoli says that the development of orthodox Zoroastrianism took place in the third century together with the political and politico-religious propaganda of the Sasanian rulers.³⁹ J. Duchesne-Guillemin assigns the spread and prospering of Zurwanism to the Arsacid period and to the beginning of the Sasanian era thus Zoroastrianism necessarily being revived by the kings and the Zoroastrian priests in early Sasanian times.⁴⁰

From the Manichaean texts we can see that Mani was clearly aware of Zurwanism, because otherwise he never would have used the name “Zurwān” (*zrw³n*) for his highest god, the Father of Greatness. But this name also shows that Zurwanism was spread only in the south-western part of the empire, i.e. in Fārs, because Parthian Manichaean texts never use the name Zurwān for this god. It can therefore be concluded that in north-eastern Iran, i.e. Parthia, Zurwanism had not spread in a manner comparable to that in the south-west.⁴¹ But also from the cosmogonical and eschatological texts of the Šābuhragān we can see that Mani mainly uses Zurwanite traditions when he relies on Iranian mythologoumena,⁴² possibly because Zurwanism in general accommodated his gnostic teachings more adequately.⁴³ When we

relate these Manichaean data to Šābuhr's reign we arrive at the conclusion that Šābuhr indeed followed Zoroastrianism in Zurwanite lines as M. Boyce had already suggested. But to my knowledge Šābuhr seemed to have been the only Zurwanite king in the early Sasanian empire. His father and predecessor Ardašīr favoured orthodox Zoroastrianism as can be derived from the Dēnkard and the "Letter of Tansar"⁴⁴ which describe the religious reforms of Zoroastrianism undertaken by Tansar on behalf of Ardašīr. Given such political and religious circumstances it was certainly better for Mani to stay outside the Sasanian borders at that time and to wait until a new ruler would ascend the throne. This happened when Šābuhr became his father's successor as can be read in a Coptic Kephalaion:⁴⁵ "In the year in which the king Ardašīr died his son Šābuhr became king and he [succeeded] him. I went from the land of the Indians to the land of the Persians ... and I appeared in front of king Šābuhr."—Šābuhr's successors and sons Ohrmazd and mainly Wahrām I. lent their ears again to the Zoroastrian clergy as was shown above. Wahrām being older than Ohrmazd was first put aside from ascending the throne so that I want to propose⁴⁶ that this must have happened on account of his Zoroastrian views that did not please his Zurwanite father Šābuhr who therefore preferred his younger son Ohrmazd to be a—Zurwanite—ruler of the state. When Kirdīr gained influence at the court of Ohrmazd, the king slowly changed his attitudes towards Zoroastrianism. After his sudden death Wahrām I. raised Zoroastrianism to the rank of a state church thus having no more place for alien religions and opening the door to intolerance and consequently to persecution of other creeds.⁴⁷

Thus the following conclusion may be drawn: In the early Sasanian empire religion and politics are brothers and we can see that each king had a kind of "court theologian". Ardašīr went with Tansar, Šābuhr went with Mani, Ohrmazd (in his later days) and Wahrām I. (and II.) went with Kirdīr. But their relevant theology was always different: While Ardašīr, Ohrmazd and Wahrām were "orthodox" Zoroastrians, Šābuhr favoured the "heretical" Zurwanism, the religion which was closer to Mani's teaching than Zoroastrianism was. Thus it becomes clear why Mani himself could make his politico-religious way only during the reign of Šābuhr. It also becomes clear why Mani adopted and adapted especially Zurwanite ideas for his teachings where he relies upon Iranian tradi-

tions. Otherwise later Manichaeism in Iran discarded Zurwanism and we always find traces of anti-Zurwanite polemics in Manichaean texts, e.g. we read in M 28: “And they assert that Ohrmizd and Ahrmēn are brothers. It is consistent with such ideas that they will come to an evil end.”⁴⁸—Besides this religious tradition another fact within Early Sasanian Iran can be traced: Šābuhr, Zurwanism and Manichaeism favoured—each one on another level—universalism, while the orthodox *mowbeds'* Zoroastrianism was nationalistic.⁴⁹ Thus Zoroastrianism remained a national Iranian religion without missionary proselytism not only within the Sasanian empire but—in theory—up to the present days within the Parsi community. Mani’s religion on the other hand became an international world religion spreading from Spain to China even though Mani’s success in Iran was only a very limited and temporary one.

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¹ M. Hutter, *Mani und die Sasaniden. Der iranisch-gnostische Synkretismus einer Weltreligion*, Innsbruck 1988, 7-10 gives a short outline of the connections between Manichaeism and other religions.

² The Parthian fragment M 38, edited by M. Boyce, *A Reader in Manichaean Middle Persian and Parthian*, Téhéran/Liège 1975 (= AcIr 9), 196.

³ Restore *trkw̄m̄n̄n̄ dyn w[zrg]*.

⁴ M 5794 cited after J.P. Asmussen, *Manichaean Literature*, Delmar 1975, 12; the Middle Persian text has been edited by Boyce, Reader 29sq.; cf. Hutter, *Mani* 49-53.

⁵ On Mani’s prophetology according to the Kephalaia cf. most recently M. Tardieu, “La diffusion du Bouddhisme dans l’empire Kouchan, l’Iran et la Chine, d’après un Kephalaion manichéen infédi”, in: *SIR* 17 (1988) 153-182, 162sqq. and W. Sundermann, “Manichaean Traditions on the Date of the Historical Buddha”, in: H. Bechert (ed.), *The Dating of the Historical Buddha*, Göttingen 1991, 426-438, 430-435 with references to older literature.

⁶ D.N. MacKenzie, “Mani’s Šābuhragān”, in: *BSOAS* 42 (1979) 500-534, 505, II. 17-28; II., in: *BSOAS* 43 (1980) 288-310; cf. Asmussen, *Literature* 104.

⁷ S.H. Taqizadeh / A.A. Širāzī, *Mānī wa Dīn-e, ū*, Teheran 1335/1956-57, 161; B. Dodge, *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm. A Tenth Century Survey of Muslim Culture*. Vol. 2, London 1970, 797sq.

⁸ F.W.K. Müller, *Handschriften-Reste in Estrangelo-Schrift aus Turfan, Chinesisch-Turkistan*. II. Teil, Berlin 1904, 11-25; MacKenzie, Šābuhragān I, 504-522; II, 289-301.

⁹ W.B. Henning, "Review of A.V.W. Jackson, Researches in Manichaeism", in: *OLZ* 37 (1934) 749-756, 751; M. Boyce, *A Catalogue of the Iranian Manuscripts in Manichean Script in the German Turfan Collection*, Berlin 1960, 132; W. Sundermann, *Mitteliranische manichäische Texte kirchengeschichtlichen Inhalts*, Berlin 1981 (= BTT 11), 92.

¹⁰ M. Hutter, *Manis kosmogonische Šābuhragān-Texte. Edition, Kommentar und literaturgeschichtliche Einordnung der manichäisch-mittelpersischen Handschriften M 98/99 I und M 7980-7984*, Wiesbaden 1992 (= StOR 21), 124-134.

¹¹ Cf. Hutter, Šābuhragān-Texte 142-144.—A brief outline of the Manichaean Myth has been given in Hutter, *Mani* 32-42 and in Boyce, Reader 4-8.

¹² Mani did not only teach the king but also other members of the royal family, e.g. Šābuhr's brothers Pērōz or Mihršāh, cf. Hutter, *Mani* 19sq. 23sq.

¹³ K. Rudolph, "Mani und der Iran", in: A. van Tongerloo/S. Giversen (eds.), *Manichaica Selecta. Studies Presented to Professor Julien Ries on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, Lovani 1991, 307-321, 316-319.

¹⁴ The importance of Manichaean ethics for salvation has been shown by M. Hutter, "Das Erlösungsgeschehen im manichäisch-iranischen Mythos. Motiv- und traditionsgeschichtliche Analysen", in: K.W. Woschitz/M. Hutter/K. Preller, *Das manichäische Urdrama des Lichtes*, Wien 1989, 153-236, 201-210, cf. also N. Sims-Williams, "The Manichaean Commandments. A Survey of the Sources", in: *Papers in Honour of Professor Mary Boyce*, Leiden 1985 (= AcIr 24), 573-582, 573-579.

¹⁵ B.T. Anklesaria, *Zand-Ākāsih. Iranian or Greater Bundahišn. Transliteration and Translation in English*, Bombay 1956, 4sqq.; M. Boyce, *Textual sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism*, Totowa 1984, 45sqq.; cf. Hutter, Erlösungsgeschehen 166sqq.

¹⁶ GrBd XXXIV, Anklesaria, Zand-Ākāsih 282sqq. and Boyce, Sources 52sq.; cf. further Zādspr. XXXIV, ed. R.C. Zaehner, *Zurvan. A Zoroastrian Dilemma*, Oxford 1955, 343-354; for a detailed analysis and comparison of the Manichaean and Zoroastrian (Zurwanite) eschatology cf. Hutter, Erlösungsgeschehen 214-216, 219sqq.

¹⁷ W. Sundermann, "Namen von Göttern, Dämonen und Menschen in iranischen Versionen des manichäischen Mythos", in: *AoF* 6 (1979) 95-133, 95sqq.

¹⁸ Cf. Sundermann, Namen 106: "Wenn er [i.e. Mani] sich in seinem Šb. so weitgehend von syr. Mustern unabhängig mache, so gewiß, um unter Iraniern und Mazdayasnern verständlich zu sein und den Eindruck der Fremdheit zu mindern."

¹⁹ DkM 412, 17-413, 2; cf. M. Shaki, "The Dēnkard Account of the History of the Zoroastrian Scriptures", in: *ArOr* 49 (1981) 114-125, 117 and Boyce, Sources 114.

²⁰ On the spread of Christianity in Iran cf. M.L. Chaumont, *La christianisation de l'empire iranien. Des origines aux grandes persécutions du IV^e siècle*, Louvain 1988 (= CSCO 499, Sub. 80).

²¹ N. Sims-Williams, "Indian Elements in Parthian and Sogdian", in: K. Röhrborn/W. Veenker (eds.), *Sprachen des Buddhismus in Zentralasien*, Wiesbaden 1983, 132-141.

²² Cf. also A. Böhlig, "Der Manichäismus", in: M.J. Vermaseren (ed.), *Die orientalischen Religionen im Römerreich*, Leiden 1981, 436-458, 436-447.

²³ A detailed historical outline of Mani's relations with Šābuhr is given by Hutter, *Mani* 16-24.

²⁴ KKZ, KSM, KNRa & KNRb; cf. editions and translations by M. Back, *Die sassanidischen Staatsinschriften*, Téhéran/Liège 1978 (= AcIr 18), 384-489 and the study by K. Mosig-Walburg, *Die frühen sassanidischen Könige als Vertreter und Förderer der zoroastrischen Religion*, Frankfurt/Main 1982, 77-105.

²⁵ Cf. also J.R. Russell, "Kartir and Mānī. A Shamanistic Model of their Conflict", in: *Iranica Varia. Papers in Honour of Professor Ehsan Yarshater*, Leiden 1990 (= AcIr 30), 180-193, 183: Kirdir and Mani accompanied Sābuhr on his campaigns against the Romans.—We cannot accept Mosig-Walburg's proposal (Könige 66sq, 93sq; cf. Boyce, Zoroastrians 109sq.) that Kirdir held a very high priestly rank already during Sābuhr's reign.

²⁶ Mosig-Walburg, Könige 97sq.

²⁷ Cf. H.J. Polotsky, *Manichäische Homilien*, Stuttgart 1934, 45, 14-18; further W. Hinz, "Mani and Kardēr", in: *La Persia nel Medioevo*, Roma 1971, 485-499, 488sq.

²⁸ Russell, Kartir 187sq. sometimes confuses Wahrām I. and II. so that the conclusions drawn by him are not always exact.

²⁹ On the textual studies of the important but fragmentary and difficult text KSM see Back, Staatsinschriften 384sqq. and P.O. Skjaervø, "'Kirdir's Vision': Translation and Analysis", in: *AMI NF* 16 (1983) 269-306; important recent analyses of this vision were given by P. Calmayer/H. Gaube, "Eine edlere Frau als sie habe ich nie gesehen", in: *Papers in Honour of Professor Mary Boyce*, Leiden 1985 (= AcIr 24), 43-60, 51-60 and Russell, Kartir 183-187.

³⁰ Cf. R.N. Frye, "Two Iranian Notes", in: *Papers in Honour of Professor Mary Boyce*, Leiden 1985 (= AcIr 24), 185-190, 189.

³¹ Pace Russell, Kartir 184; Russell also mentions the following shamanistic elements in Manichaeism: Mani's twin, his visionary appearance in front of Mār Ammō and his journey through the air.

³² W. Sundermann, *OLZ* 86 (1991) 310sq.

³³ Back, Staatsinschriften 414-416.

³⁴ Asmussen, Literature 54sq.; for the historical setting of Mani's death cf. Hutter, Mani 27-31.

³⁵ C.R.C. Allberry, *A Manichaean Psalm-Book II*, Stuttgart 1938, 16, 19-23, cf. 15, 5-12; further Hinz, Mani 491.

³⁶ Polotsky, Homilien 47, 22-24.

³⁷ Cited after Gh. Gnoli, *The Idea of Iran. An Essay on its Origin*, Roma 1989, 170, cf. Russell, Kartir 181. Something similar is stated in the "Letter of Tansar": "For church and state are born of the one womb, joined together and never be sundered", cited after Boyce, Sources 109.

³⁸ M. Boyce, *Zoroastrians. Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, London 1979, 112sq.; M. Boyce, "Some Further Reflections on Zurvanism", in: *Iranica Varia: Papers in Honor of Professor Ehsan Yarshater*, Leiden 1990 (= AcIr 30), 20-29, 25sq.

³⁹ Gnoli, Idea 140.

⁴⁰ J. Duchesne-Guillemin, "Zoroastrian Religion", in: E. Yarshater (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran. Vol. 3(2). The Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian Periods*, Cambridge 1983, 866-908, 901.

⁴¹ On the divine name *zruw'n* in Manichaean texts see Sundermann, Namen 124 notes 138-142 and Boyce, Zoroastrians 112.

⁴² I have analysed these traditions in a separate study, see Hutter, Erlösungsgeschehen *passim*, cf. also Rudolph, Mani 314sq.

⁴³ Cf. also Frye, Notes 190 who suggests Zurwanism being part of the gnostic

milieu at Mani's time.—One also might ask whether gnosis as a "Weltanschauung" gave an impulse for the prospering of Zurwanism in the first centuries A.D.

⁴⁴ The text from the Dēnkard has been translated by Shaki, Account 118sq. and Boyce, Sources 114; for the Letter of Tansar see Boyce, Sources 109-111.

⁴⁵ H.J. Polotsky/A. Böhlig, *Kephalaia*. 1. Hälfte, Stuttgart 1940, 15, 27-31; the text is restored according to W. Sundermann, "Zur frühen missionarischen Wirksamkeit Manis", in: *AOH* 24 (1971) 79-125, 95 with references to A. Maricq and L.Th. Lefort.

⁴⁶ Cf. already Hutter, Mani 27.

⁴⁷ Cf. also Gnoli, Idea 140, who however does not give an exact date within the third century for this politico-religious development.

⁴⁸ Cited after Asmussen, Literature 13sq.; we can also mention the Uygur Xwāstwānīft text which has an obvious Iranian background and shows also anti-Zurwanite polemics; here we read: "If we should have said: 'He (= Azrua = Zurwān) is the one who has created the immortal gods' or we should have said: 'Xormuzta tāṇri and Šimnu are brothers', ... (then), my God, I repent." (J.P. Asmussen, *Xwāstwānīft. Studies in Manichaeism*, Copenhagen 1965, 194 I C).

⁴⁹ On Zoroastrian nationalism see Gnoli, Idea 158.

LAY AND MONASTIC FORMS OF PURE LAND DEVOTIONALISM: TYPOLOGY AND HISTORY

ALLAN A. ANDREWS

Summary

This study attempts to broaden the usual understanding of the Chinese and Japanese Pure Land traditions by delineating two orientations toward Pure Land devotionalism: A lay orientation which is usually considered the whole of Pure Land devotionalism, and a monastic orientation which is often excluded from the history of Pure Land piety. This distinction makes clear not only the greater breadth of the Pure Land movement, but the way in which its growth was influenced by cross-currents between its two wings.

In part one of the paper, the two orientations are typologically differentiated by considerations of (1) their views of history and of the human condition, (2) the types of buddha-reflection (*nien-fo/nembutsu*) they taught, and (3) their soteriologies.

In part two we then sketch the history of these two forms of Pure Land devotionalism in China and Japan down to the twelfth century. We propose four stages of development: (1) A stage of initial formulation of the principals and styles of the monastic and the lay oriented traditions by Lu-shan Hui-yuan [334-416] and T'an-luan [c. 488-554], respectively; (2) a stage of clear differentiation of the two traditions represented by Chih-i [538-97] on the one hand, and by Shan-tao [613-81] on the other; (3) a stage of integration of the two forms, in China by Tz'u-min hui-jih [680-748], and in Japan by Genshin [942-1017]; and (4) a stage of radical re-differentiation of these by Hōnen [1133-1212] in Japan.

This study¹ attempts to broaden the usual understanding of the Chinese and Japanese Pure Land traditions by delineating two orientations toward Pure Land devotionalism: A lay orientation which is usually considered the whole of Pure Land devotionalism and a monastic orientation which is often excluded from the history of Pure Land piety.² This difference will help us understand not only the greater breadth of the Pure Land movement, but the way in which its growth was influenced by cross-currents between its two wings.

Before attempting to differentiate lay and monastic Pure Land devotionalism let us note what they have in common—Pure Land piety itself. This we can characterize as devotion to the Buddha

Amitābha³ of the Western Pure Land and reliance upon his compassion for assistance toward Pure Land rebirth or toward enlightenment. Such devotion is usually expressed by means of ‘buddha-reflection,’ that is, by means of *nien-fo* or *nembutsu*.⁴ The lay orientation of Pure Land devotionalism, though led by clergy and available for clergy, was especially directed toward and strongly appealed to lay persons—householders who felt themselves to be heavily burdened with unwholesome karma and thus unable to make progress toward emancipation through the typical means of discipline and learning employed by Buddhist clergy. Lay Pure Land devotees thus sought rebirth in the Western Pure Land by means of devotion to the soter, Amitabha Buddha. Moreover the lay orientation emphasized the bodhisattva vows of Amitabha, and relied heavily on the *Sutra of Limitless Life*⁵ and the *Sutra of Contemplation on the Buddha of Limitless Life* (hereafter, *Contemplation Sutra*). The monastic orientation, on the other hand, was designed for monks—religious virtuosos who sought to realize enlightenment or buddhahood in their present lifetimes by means of meditative exercises focused upon Amitabha Buddha as object. It relied on the *Sutra on the Samadhi of Seeing All Buddhas*, the *Sutra on the Perfection of Wisdom Spoken by Manjusri*⁶ and other texts teaching the pursuit of enlightenment by means of buddha-reflection.

We will elaborate these differences with a discussion of the thought and practices of these two orientations and will then proceed to a sketch of their histories in China and Japan down to the twelfth century.

I. Typological Characteristics

In delineating the two orientations we will focus on three points of divergence (though there are many more): (1) Their respective views of history and the human condition, (2) their practices, especially their notions and uses of buddha-reflection, and (3) their soteriologies.

In China from the sixth through the ninth centuries, and likewise in Japan from the eleventh century on, many Buddhists accepted a view of history known as the three periods of dharma. In this view not only the transmission of the dharma—the teachings of

Śākyamuni Buddha⁷—but also the quality of the times and the capacity of human beings, gradually deteriorate in four successive stages: From (1) a period of right dharma, through (2) a time of semblance dharma, into (3) an age of final dharma, and finally concluding in (4) an age of the complete extinction of dharma. While there were various theories on the dates of these periods, Chinese Buddhists generally agreed that the age of the final dharma began in 552 c.e. and Japanese Buddhists that it began in 1052 c.e.⁸

Pure Land teachers of the lay orientation such as Tao-ch’o (562-645) embraced an extreme version of this view which emphasized the nearly complete depravity and helplessness of human beings in the final age of dharma, and consequently asserted the necessity of total and exclusive reliance upon Amitabha Buddha. Teachers with a monastic orientation to Pure Land piety, such as Chih-i (538-597) and Chi-tsang (549-623), either rejected the identification of their age with the final age of dharma or insisted on the necessity for even greater monastic discipline and personal effort during such a degenerate time. In short, teachers of lay Pure Land piety saw the human condition as virtually hopeless without intervention by the Buddha, while those of the monastic orientation insisted on strenuous self-effort even in the final age of dharma.

The lay and monastic orientations to Pure Land piety can also be differentiated on the basis of their understanding and practice of buddha-reflection. By ‘buddha-reflection’ we of course mean *nien-fo* or *nembutsu*. Literally meaning to think upon or remember the Buddha, buddha-reflection includes a wide range of practices from the deep meditations of buddha-reflection samadhi (*nien-fo sanmei/nembutsu sammai*) to the rote repetition of Amitabha’s name. It is thus a form of cultivation which can be adapted to a wide variety of cultivators and many situations, and in this lies much of the potential for the diversity of Pure Land devotionalism which we are here exploring.

Amongst meditative types of buddha-reflection we may distinguish a form called buddha-contemplation (*kuan-fo/kam-butsu*). This is the practice of gazing upon an image or painting of Amitabha or his land until a mental image of this can be retained in the mind’s eye when the eyes are closed. This vision is then developed—or develops—into a presence of the actual Buddha such

that we may describe it as a ‘buddhophany,’ a manifestation or appearance of the actual Buddha. At the other extreme of buddha-reflection we find the quite simple practice of uttering the invocation, ‘Homage to the Buddha of Limitless Light and Life’ (nan-wu A-mi-t’o fo/namu Amida Butsu). We will call this practice invocational buddha-reflection.

Having distinguished these two main types of buddha-reflection, it now becomes a simple task to differentiate between the practices of the lay and monastic orientations to Pure Land devotionalism. Teachers with the lay orientation considered buddha-reflection the most important among all practices and emphasized the easiest form, invocation of the Buddha’s name. Furthermore, they stressed invocation at the moment of death when it was thought that this practice was most effective. On the other hand, masters who represent the monastic orientation saw buddha-reflection as an auxiliary practice useful for settling the mind and calling forth the assistance of the Buddha, and they favored the more difficult forms of buddha-reflection, especially buddha-contemplation.⁹

The differences we have just discussed presuppose divergent soteriologies. The lay orientation seeks rebirth into Amitabha Buddha’s Pure Land. In other words, its goal is conveyance to a transcendent and beatific domain free of the deficiencies of this world through the agency of a soter, Amitabha. This soteriology can be characterized as posthumous, bestowed, and universalist: (a) Posthumous because it seeks spiritual fulfillment only after death; (b) bestowed because it relies on the compassion of Amitabha Buddha to bestow rebirth upon even those who are incapable of earning it themselves; and (c) universalist, first because it assumes that virtually everyone is in need of Pure Land salvation, and second because it regards Amitabha Buddha as a savior especially committed to the salvation of all human beings what-so-ever, including those morally or intellectually deficient.

Monastic Pure Land devotionalism seeks by means of buddha-reflection not, as a rule, rebirth but rather immediate enlightenment, or at least an enlightening realization. This can be described as an immanent, earned and elitist soteriology: (a) Immanent because it seeks a realization in the here and now of an inherent, ultimate reality—buddha-nature, ‘emptiness,’ etc.; (b) earned

because it requires a major effort at learning and discipline by the aspirant; and (c) elitist because it assumes that at any one time only a small minority—especially monastics, and educated clergy—are capable of this realization. Failing the attainment of their ultimate goal, many who choose this orientation did aspire to Pure Land rebirth, but only as a lesser alternative.

II. Historical Sketch

We will now sketch the history of these two Pure Land orientations in China and Japan down to the twelfth century. There were four stages of development:

1. A stage of initial formulation of the principles and styles of the two orientations—(a) of the monastic orientation by Lu-shan Hui-yuan (334-416) based upon the *Sutra on the Samadhi of Seeing All Buddhas*; (b) of the lay orientation by T'an-luan (c. 488-554) based upon the *Sutra of Limitless Life* and the *Discourse on the Sutra of Limitless Life*;
2. A stage of clear differentiation of the two orientations—(a) of the monastic orientation by Chih-i (538-597) in his *Great Concentration and Contemplation*; (b) of the lay orientation by Shantaο (613-681) based upon the *Contemplation Sutra*;
3. A stage of integration of the two orientations—(a) in China by Tz'u-min (680-748) and later figures, which became the persistent tendency; (b) in Japan by Genshin (942-1017), though only temporarily;
4. A stage of thorough re-differentiation of the two orientations in Japan by Hônen (1133-1212).

Let us survey each of these four stages.

1. Initial Formulation of the Two Orientations

The initial formulations of the principals and styles of monastic and lay Pure Land devotionalism were accomplished by Lu-shan Hui-yuan and T'an-luan, respectively, between the early fifth and the late sixth centuries of the common era.

The Pure Land piety of Hui-yuan not only initiated the monastic orientation, it is virtually synonymous with the beginnings of Pure

Land devotionalism in China. In 402 c.e. Hui-yuan brought together before an image of Amitabha Buddha one hundred and twenty-three of his monastic and lay followers and led them in a vow to be reborn together in Amitabha's Pure Land. This group, which later became known as the White Lotus Society, periodically assembled before an image of Amitabha, offered flowers and incense, recited their vow, and then engaged, according to their vow, in 'profound meditation' upon a 'divine picture' (T50.359a5-6;¹⁰ Zurcher, 245). In other words, Hui-yuan and his companions cultivated buddha-contemplation. Because there are no instructions for buddha-contemplation in any of the recensions or translations of the *Larger Pure Land Sutra*, and moreover because the *Contemplation Sutra* had not yet appeared in China, their contemplations were almost certainly based upon the *Sutra on the Samadhi of Seeing All Buddhas*.¹¹

The *Sutra on the Samadhi of Seeing All Buddhas* was one of the earliest texts translated into Chinese. Its first rendering was probably in 179 c.e. by the pioneer missionary Lokakṣema (fl. 147-86) in a three-scroll version (T # 418), which was later summarized on one scroll (T # 417).¹² It urges contemplation upon Amitabha Buddha in pursuit of the perfection of wisdom (i.e., prajñā-pāramitā; T # 417, 13.899a10-20 and b1-6; and T # 418, 13.905a7-b19),¹³ but also, in one brief but important passage, reflection upon Amitabha in aspiration for rebirth in his land (T # 418, 13.905b10-13). In fact, the single-scroll translation of the text recommends reflecting upon the *name* of Amitabha (T # 417, 13.899a28-b2). In short, this early Mahayana sutra provided paradigms for the two methods of buddha-reflection and their two associated soteriologies which we have identified as characteristic of the two orientations to Pure Land piety: (1) Buddha-contemplation seeking enlightenment in the perfection of wisdom of the monastic orientation, and (2) buddha-invocation (since it is virtually the same act to think upon a name—that is, to recite it silently—and to intone or invoke it aloud) seeking posthumous rebirth of the lay orientation.

Utilizing this sutra, Hui-yuan and his companions had a twofold objective: (1) Immediate enlightenment in the perfection of wisdom by means of buddha-reflection samadhi, i.e., of a visualization of Amitabha and all the buddhas of the ten regions, or, if not suc-

cessful in this first aim, then (2) Pure Land rebirth after death by means of invocation and other forms of worship of Amitabha. They probably practiced both major forms of buddha-reflection—contemplation and invocation—simultaneously.

The significance of Hui-yuan's Pure Land piety for the development of Pure Land devotionalism in East Asia is thus many-faceted: (1) His 'White Lotus Society' became the prototype for Pure Land rebirth fellowships and an inspiration to Pure Land piety down through the centuries and across East Asia. (2) The style and aims of his Pure Land practice initiated a long and rich tradition of Pure Land piety both rigorously meditative and deeply devotional. (3) Hui-yuan introduced to East Asians the *Sutra on the Samadhi of Seeing All Buddhas*, which stimulated the compilation of a host of 'buddha-contemplation' texts (kuan-fo ching/kambutsu kyō), including the enormously influential *Contemplation Sutra* (Pas). (4) Hui-yuan's inclusion of laymen in his Pure Land fellowship and his cultivation of invocational as well as contemplative buddha-reflection became important precedents for the eventual popularization of Pure Land piety.

In spite of these emphases, however, Lu-shan Hui-yuan's style of Pure Land piety became a model primarily for clergy like himself. Shortly we will trace his influence on a monastic orientation to Pure Land faith. First, however, let us discuss the emergence of the lay orientation in the teachings of the monk T'an-luan.

Given the precedent of Hui-yuan's Pure Land devotionalism and the fact that the major Pure Land sutras—the *Sutra on the Samadhi of Seeing All Buddhas*, the larger and smaller *Sukhāvati-vyūha* sutras and the *Contemplation Sutra*—had been in circulation for a century or more, it is not surprising that in the first half of the sixth century a thinker of the caliber of T'an-luan (c. 488-554)¹⁴ should appear and develop a system of Pure Land religious thought adaptable to the needs of the laity. T'an-luan's major work is his *Commentary on the Discourse on the Sutra of Limitless Life*. He opens with a preface purporting to summarize the so-called 'Chapter on the Easy Practice' of the *Shastra on the Ten Bodhisattva Stages* attributed to Nāgārjuna:

Respectfully pondering Nāgārjuna's *Shastra on the Ten Bodhisattva Stages*, it says there are two ways in which a bodhisattva may seek to reach the stage

of non-regression: (1) The way of difficult practice, and (2) the way of easy practice. The way of difficult practice means that during an age of the five corruptions, at a time when there is no Buddha, there will be difficulties in seeking to reach the stage of non-regression. Everywhere we see these difficulties. It is like walking painfully overland on foot. The way of easy practice means that simply by faith in the Buddha one aspires to be born in the Pure Land, and by riding on the Buddha's vow-power one attains birth in that Pure Land. Sustained by the Buddha's power, one enters into the assembly of those rightly established in the Mahayana, that is, those at the stage of non-regression.¹⁵ It is like riding happily over water in a boat.¹⁶

In this preface T'an-luan articulated the central theses of lay Pure Land thought: (1) There exists an easier way to emancipation than the arduous bodhisattva path; (2) This easy way is necessitated by the absence of a Buddha and the consequent decadence of the age and degeneration of human capability; (3) The easy way consists of faith in Amitabha Buddha and aspiration for rebirth in his Pure Land; (4) Rebirth in the Pure Land is possible because of the power of Amitabha's original bodhisattva vows; (5) Rebirth in Amitabha Buddha's Pure Land assures rapid progress to Buddhahood. These ideas are consonant with the view of history and the soteriology characteristic of lay Pure Land piety.

T'an-luan also contributed to the emergence of a lay form of praxis, i.e., invocation of the Buddha. As practice T'uan-luan urged the five dharma-gates of buddha-reflection (*wu-nien men*) taught in the *Discourse on the Sutra of Limitless Life*. These are centered upon contemplative buddha-reflection, and T'an-luan's *Commentary* describes and praises twenty-nine features of Amitabha and his Pure Land as objects of contemplation. However, he also defended the possibility of Pure Land rebirth for even the most evil of sentient beings by just ten invocations of the name at the moment of death as described in the *Contemplation Sutra* (T40.834b13-c17). Taking his cue from the *Discourse*, T'an-luan argued that the Buddha's name has this power to save because it is not like other names, a mere designation, but rather is identical with the reality to which it refers, the limitless light (*wu-ai, kuang*; Skt., amitābha) of the Buddha's wisdom. Therefore, when invoked with faith that is pure, strong and constant it can extinguish all the dark ignorance of sentient beings and fulfill their aspirations for rebirth in the Pure Land (T40.835b11-c2).

2. Clear Differentiation of the Two Orientations

Lu-shan Hui-yuan's Pure Land practices began a tradition of Pure Land piety which especially appealed to monastics and the upper strata of Chinese society. Yet, as we have pointed out, he sought Pure Land rebirth as well as enlightenment in the perfection of wisdom, and moreover he included laymen in his Pure Land confraternity. Likewise, although T'an-luan established the principles of a lay orientation to Pure Land devotionalism, his praxis was centered on buddha-contemplation. It was not until the late sixth and the mid-seventh centuries, respectively, that these two tendencies became fully differentiated. This was accomplished for the monastic orientation by T'ien-t'ai Chih-i and for the lay orientation by Shan-tao.

There were Buddhist monastics before Chih-i who valued Pure Land piety,¹⁷ but it was not until Chih-i that devotion to Amitabha became fully integrated into a system of monastic practices. Among Chih-i's writings is a monumental treatise on meditation, the *Great Concentration and Contemplation*. The pragmatic core of this work is four exercises in meditation or 'samadhis,' one of which is called constantly walking samadhi (ch'ang-hsing san-mei). Like Lu-shan Hui-yuan's meditations, constantly walking samadhi is based on the *Sutra on the Samadhi of Seeing All Buddhas*. It requires the practitioners to continually circumambulate an image of Amitabha Buddha, never stopping, sitting nor sleeping except to eat or perform bodily functions for a period of ninety days. While so doing, they are constantly to call upon the name of Amitabha and contemplate his thirty-two buddha-marks, from the dharma-wheels on the soles of his feet to the fleshy top-knot on his head and then back down again, over and over. Summarizing, Chih-i says,

Walking and walking, calling and calling, reflecting upon and reflecting upon, there is only Amitabha Buddha.¹⁸

The aim of constantly walking samadhi is to achieve a vision of Amitabha Buddha, and moreover, as in the *Sutra on the Samadhi of Seeing All Buddhas*, a manifestation to the mind's eye of all the buddhas of the universe. Yet, as Daniel B. Stevenson (1986, 59) points out,

The devotional element in this practice ... undoubtedly plays a key role; however, as the practitioner becomes more skilled at constructing the mental image of the Buddha, the orientation of the visualization begins to shift radically. Eventually the eidetic image of Amitābha begins to lose its devotional character altogether and instead becomes the basis for a simple dialectical investigation into the nature of mind and of the noetic act itself.

In this way Chih-i's constantly walking samadhi utilizes Pure Land devotionalism only for the purpose of attaining a higher objective. For Chih-i, buddha-reflection was but a skillful means for realization of the perfection of wisdom.¹⁹ Conforming to the typology we outlined above, Chih-i used invocation of Amitabha as a means to perfect buddha-contemplation, and his soteric objective was immediate enlightenment and not Pure Land rebirth.

After Chih-i a number of masters of other schools—such as Chi-tsang (549-623) of the San-lun School, Tao-hsin (580-651) and Hung-jen (601-674) of the Ch'an School, Ch'eng-kuan (738-839) and Tsung-mi (780-841) of the Hua-yen School—also utilized the monastic approach to Pure Land piety (Chappell 1986; Faure; Mochizuki, 24-37, 210-21, 242-52, 309-14). Several of these figures contributed to a rapprochement between the two orientations, as we will discuss below. First, however, let us consider the thorough differentiation of the lay orientation by Shan-tao.

The version of Chinese Pure Land devotionalism most attractive to lay persons was formulated by the seventh century monk Shan-tao (613-681). Let us summarize his positions on the topics which distinguish the two orientations, that is, view of history, soteriology, and practice, especially buddha-reflection.

Shan-tao concurred in the views of his predecessors T'an-luan and Tao-ch'o that the times were an inferior age of dharma, but emphasized even more emphatically than they the deterioration of humankind during such an age. For example, in defining the 'deep faith' (*shen-hsin*) necessary for Pure Land rebirth Shan-tao maintained that his contemporaries must acknowledge that they were but,

common sentient beings, utterly laden with ignorance and passion, shallow of [karmic] good roots, transmigrating through the triple world and never escaping this burning house [of samsara]....²⁰

Moreover, Shan-tao interpreted the Pure Land sutras as discourses preached by Śākyamuni especially for such beings in

such an age.²¹ Thus, while Shan-tao did not address his teachings specifically to either clergy or laity, he did intend it for those of little or no virtue, learning or self-discipline, which allowed the ordinary people of his times—lay or clerical, but especially lay—to identify themselves as those for whom the buddhas had prepared and preached salvation through Pure Land rebirth.

It is noteworthy that Shan-tao taught that women as well as men could be saved into the Pure Land. Buddhists have generally considered females to be especially burdened with passion and evil karma and thus to require rebirth in a male form before becoming capable of enlightenment or nirvana. According to this way of thinking, only males could aspire to Pure Land rebirth. Shan-tao interpreted the thirty-fifth vow of the *Sutra of Limitless Life* as a promise to women who call on Amitabha of immediate rebirth as males into the Pure Land where they would realize full enlightenment (T47.27b15-23). This probably appealed to many women who were of course almost entirely among the laity.

Shan-tao's soteriology also was thoroughly lay in orientation. Given his view of human weakness in his times, it is understandable that he had absolutely no interest in teaching or seeking immediate enlightenment of the type valued by those of the monastic orientation. The central emphasis in all his works is the urgent necessity to seek the Pure Land salvation made available through Amitabha's vows.

While Shan-tao's views on history and soteriology are clear, there is considerable ambiguity in his teachings on buddha-reflection. He taught that the religious life should be firmly grounded in devotion to Amitabha expressed primarily in reflection upon that Buddha, but he valued both invocational and contemplative buddha-reflection highly, and it is not clear how he prioritized these two practices. For example, although he twice neatly summarizes Pure Land practices under five categories, he gives priority to invocation in one formulation (T37.272a-b), and completely omits it from the other (T47.438c-439a). As this is an issue which deserves more space than we have available here, let me propose the following tentative summation.

Shan-tao repeatedly urges aspirants for Pure Land rebirth to reflect on the Buddha to the utmost of their ability, the most

capable without cease for a lifetime—presumably including both contemplation and invocation—and the least capable for at least ten invocations.²² This means that Shan-tao considered invocation more suitable for those less capable and other forms of buddha-reflection—contemplative and meditative—appropriate for those more capable. Yet these distinctions as to types of practices in relation to types of practitioners must be seen in light of that even more fundamental conviction held by Shan-tao—his firm belief that in his times virtually everyone belonged to the ranks of destitute ‘common sentient beings.’²³ In other words, while Shan-tao may have considered ten invocations of the name a desperate recourse for the most helpless wretches, he saw himself and his contemporaries as exactly that sort of person.

Finally, and perhaps more important in its appeal to a wide audience, Shan-tao was the first thinker to clearly and consistently identify the ten buddha-reflections of the eighteenth vow of the *Sutra of Limitless Life*, the acts which were considered the minimal condition for rebirth, with merely ten-invocations of Amitabha’s name as described in the *Contemplation Sutra*.²⁴ The practice which the laity were able and willing to do—calling on the name of the savior Amitabha—was according to Shan-tao the very practice which the Buddha had prepared for their salvation in the latter age of the dharma.

The respected hagiographer Tao-hsuan (596-667) recorded this episode concerning his contemporary, Shan-tao:

Nearby there is a mountain monk, Shan-tao. He only cultivated the Pure [Land] practice of buddha-reflection (nien-fo) upon Amitabha. Then entering the capitol [Ch’ang-an] he taught this everywhere. He copied the *Amitabha Sutra* several tens of thousands of times. Countless laymen and lay women revered him. Once when he was expounding the dharma at the Kuang-ming Temple [in the capital] a man requested guidance, asking, ‘If I now reflect (nien) on the Buddha [Amitabha’s] name, will I be sure of rebirth in the Pure Land? [Shan-] Tao said, ‘If you reflect on the Buddha, you will certainly be reborn.’ The man bowed in reverence, and calling and calling, ‘Nan-wu A-mi-t’o Fo,’ he left through the gate of Kuang-ming temple. He then climbed a willow tree, and raising his joined palms in reverence and aspiration for the West [-ern land], threw himself to the ground and immediately died.²⁵

This colorful account provides us with contemporary witness to Shan-tao’s vigorous evangelism and powerful impact on his con-

temporaries. We can conclude that with his emphasis upon the degeneracy of his times, his exclusive commitment to the goal of Pure Land rebirth and his passionate advocacy of invocation of the Buddha's name as the means to salvation for all, Shan-tao formulated the principles and practices of a Pure Land devotionalism best suited to the needs of the Chinese laity.²⁶

3. Integration of the Two Traditions in China and Japan

Shan-tao lived and taught in the seventh century or early T'ang Period (618-906). This was an age of rich diversification of Chinese Buddhism. Other great Buddhist leaders such as Hsuan-tsang (596-664), Hung-jen (601-674) and Fa-tsang (642-712) were at that time also engaged in shaping distinctive Chinese Buddhist positions. However, in the case of Pure Land devotionalism, from the eighth century this tendency toward differentiation began to reverse itself, and by the Northern Sung period (960-1126) the two diverse wings of Pure Land piety had become firmly and permanently reunited.

This reintegration began with the teachings of the Pure Land evangelist Tz'u-min Hui-jih (680-748). Tz'u-min returned to China in 719 after 17 years of travel and study in India and spent the remainder of his life promoting Pure Land piety. He advocated a balanced religious life of practice, scholarship and morality, and as practice, invocational and contemplative buddha-reflection, as well as *dhyāna* meditation (Mochizuki, 260-67; Ono).

After Tz'u-min, the mid-T'ang period shows an increasing interest in Pure Land devotionalism by teachers of several monastic schools, such as Fei-hsi (d.u.; active 740-780) of the T'ien-t'ai School and Tsung-mi (643-712) and Ch'eng-kuan (738-839) of the Hua-yen lineage. These and other monastics formulated doctrines integrating the practice of calling on the Buddha's name for Pure Land rebirth into their schools' practices (Chappell 1986, 179-87). Another indication of this rapprochement was the compilation in the mid-eighth century of the T'ien-t'ai text entitled *Ten Doubts on the Pure Land*. This apologetic work defends against typical monastic objections the possibility of Pure Land rebirth by means of ten reflections upon Amitabha for even 'common sentient beings,' yet

it became canonical within the T'ien-t'ai monastic school by the close of the eighth century.²⁷ Thus the T'ien-t'ai and Hua-yen schools began to accommodate the goals and methods of both the monastic and lay orientations to Pure Land piety.

From the Northern Sung Period the most viable forms of Buddhism were Pure Land and Ch'an. Ch'an monks such as Yung-ming Yen-shou (904-975), drawing upon the thought of the mid-T'ang T'ien-t'ai and Hua-yen syncretizers, incorporated the practice of calling on the name of Amitabha into Ch'an monastic praxis and established a system of so-called 'dual-cultivation Ch'an' (Shih). This became the wave of the future (Hurvitz 1970; Welch), and both the lay and monastic orientations to Pure Land piety ceased to exist as autonomous traditions of Chinese Buddhism.²⁸

A similar integration took place in Japan, though it did not become permanent. In his treatise *Essentials of Pure Land Rebirth* the Tendai monk Genshin (942-1017) both introduced lay Pure Land thought to Japan and attempted to integrate it with the monastic Pure Land devotionalism of T'ien-t'ai Chih-i (Andrews 1989, 1990, 1991). The opening words of the *Essentials* clearly express the view of history and the universal soteriology of lay Pure Land piety:

The teachings and practices for rebirth into the land Boundless Bliss are the eyes and limbs of this defiled world in the final age [of the dharma]. Who among clerics, laymen, nobles or commoners does not seek refuge there?²⁹

In Chapter 4, 'The Proper Practice of Buddha-reflection,' Genshin attempts to synthesize the lay style of practice with the monastic approach of Chih-i. There he presents a series of exercises in buddha-reflection which begins with the monastic practice of contemplation of the physical characteristics of Amitabha Buddha, proceeds to the *Great Concentration and Contemplation's* meditation upon the three embodiments of the Buddha as emptiness, conditioned existence and middle-truth (k'ung-chia-chung/kū-ke-chū) (T46.6b-7b; T84.55b-56a; Andrews 1973, 60-63), and concludes with instructions for those 'incapable of contemplating the buddha-marks' to just 'single mindedly call and reflect on the Buddha' in the lay manner (T84.56b; Andrews 1973, 64-66).

Thus, utilizing the normative Mahayana Buddhist principle of providing a hierarchy of means and ends appropriate to a corre-

sponding hierarchy of human capabilities, Genshin attempted to integrate the monastic and lay styles of practice—monastic buddha-contemplation seeking immediate realization of enlightenment for the more capable, and buddha-invocation in aspiration for Pure Land rebirth for the less capable, including the laity. Moreover, on the basis of the principle of the suitability of easy invocation for the least capable, a principle established by Chinese teachers of the lay-orientation, Genshin also maintained in the last chapter of the *Essentials* the possibility of Pure Land rebirth for virtually all living beings by just ten invocations of Amitabha's name (T84.80b-81c; Andrews 1973, 94-96).

In these and other ways Genshin succeeded in incorporating the lay and monastic orientations to Pure Land piety into a single system of practice and thought.

4. Re-differentiation of the Two Orientations in Japan

Genshin's *Essentials of Pure Land Rebirth* provided a basis for the joint development of lay and monastic styles of Pure Land piety in Japan during the succeeding two centuries (Inoue, 157-333). In the late twelfth century, however, the cleric Hōnen-bō Genkū (1133-1212) thoroughly rejected the monastic style of contemplative buddha-reflection in favor of total commitment to the lay oriented practice of invoking the name. Thereupon the lay orientation to Pure Land piety was launched permanently on a course of independent development in Japan.

In Hōnen's *One Page Testament* (1212) we find the following unequivocal statement of separation of lay Pure Land piety from the amalgam shaped by Genshin two centuries before:

That which I teach is neither the contemplative buddha-reflection brought to our land long ago and propagated by various scholars, nor meditative buddha-reflection based on learning which achieves enlightenment, but is just the utterance of 'Namu Amida Butsu' for the purpose of rebirth in [the land] Boundless Bliss with no doubt what-so-ever of rebirth.³⁰

Hōnen's teachings represent a thorough repudiation of the monastic orientation to Pure Land devotionalism, and this bifurcation became permanent for Japanese Buddhism.

Conclusion

The appeal of Pure Land Buddhism to East Asian lay Buddhists has long been recognized. It is now clear that this form of Buddhism had a strong appeal for monastics as well. As we have seen, these two orientations shared much, but they also differed in significant ways and participated in a dynamic interaction and mutual enrichment over many centuries in both China and Japan.

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² For example, see Ch'en, 338-50.

³ Or Amitāyus; Cn., A-mi-t'o Fo; Jp., Amida Butsu, we will omit diacritics in subsequent occurrences of Sanskrit words frequently used in this article and in Sanskrit words which occur in English translations of the titles of texts. Nor will we use diacritics for foreign words which have been adopted into English. See Jackson 1982 for a partial list of English words of Sanskrit origin.

⁴ We will use the English rendering 'buddha-reflection' rather than *nien-fo* or *nembutsu*, first because it will allow us to employ a common term for both the Chinese '*nien-fo*' and the Japanese '*nembutsu*', and secondly because it will enable us to refer to all the forms of *nien-fo/nembutsu* with an inclusive rubric. A slash will indicate Chinese and Japanese words, in that order; for graphs see the Chinese/Japanese Character List.

⁵ See 'References' for original language titles and bibliographic information on this and other texts introduced.

⁶ See Chappell 1986, Faure, and Stevenson for discussions of the role of the *Sutra on the Perfection of Wisdom Spoken by Manjusri*.

⁷ The historical Buddha, Gautama.

⁸ These periods were emphasized in texts transmitted to China in the fifth and sixth centuries and elaborated by Chinese such as Hui-ssu (515-557), Hsin-hsin (540-594), Chi-tsang (549-623) and Tao-ch'o (562-645); see Chappell 1980, Lai and Yamada.

⁹ In spite of these important differences we should keep in mind that in practice there was often no absolute distinction between different types of buddha-reflection. For example, the devotional practice of invocation usually possessed a meditative dimension, and not infrequently contemplative and invocational buddha-reflection were cultivated simultaneously. See below the discussions of the types of buddha-reflection taught by Lu-shan Hui-yuan and T'ien-t'ai Chih-i.

¹⁰ *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*, Vol. 50, p. 359, tier 'a', lines 5 and 6.

¹¹ We also know from other sources that Hui-yuan was very interested in this text; see Mochizuki, 24-28 and Zurcher, 220-221. The version of the *Larger Pure Land Sutra* used by Hui-yuan was probably the *Great Amitabha Sutra* rendered into Chinese in the first half of the third century (Fujita, 51-64; Zurcher, 50). The traditional dates of the translation of the *Contemplation Sutra* are 424-442, but it is now clear that a major portion, if not the entirety, of this work was composed in China at about this time; see Fujita, 116-36 and Ryukoku 1984, xvii-xxvii.

¹² *Taishō* texts, serial numbers 418 and 417. The three-scroll translation was used by Lu-shan Hui-yuan and the one-scroll version by Shan-tao. There were in all seven translations into Chinese of which four survive. See Fujita, 224-33; Harrison; Inagaki; Mizuno, 96-97; Nōnin; and Zurcher, 35.

¹³ Text serial number 417, Vol. 13, etc.

¹⁴ On the dates of T'an-luan see Pruden 1975, 76.

¹⁵ Those who will make rapid progress to buddhahood without lapsing.

¹⁶ T40.826a-b; see alternative translations by Corless, 89-90 and Haneda, 66-67.

¹⁷ Such as Ching-ying Hui-yuan (523-592), who, though a devotee of Maitreya Bodhisattva, wrote commentaries on both the *Sutra of Limitless Life* and the *Contemplation Sutra*; see Tanaka, and Mochizuki, 89-90.

¹⁸ T46.12b23-24.

¹⁹ As expressed in Chih-i's unique formulation; see Hurvitz 1962, 271-75.

²⁰ T47.438c; See also T37.271a-b. Shan-tao considered himself also such a 'common sentient being' (fanfu; Skt., prthagñana), i.e., a person who has not yet entered upon even the most preliminary stages of the bodhisattva career; see T37.146b13.

²¹ See especially the first chapter of his *Commentary on the Contemplation Sutra*, T37.245c-251c and Haneda, 208-310.

²² For example, at T37.247b10; T37.250b7-8; T37.273c28-29; and T47.439b.

²³ On this point see Haneda, 149-70.

²⁴ See especially T47.447c23-26 and T47.27a16-19.

²⁵ T50.684a; appended to the biography of Hui-t'ung (d. 649). On Shan-tao's life and biographies see Seah.

²⁶ We have focused on the thought of lay Pure Land leadership, but there is also archeological evidence that during the early T'ang period the worship of Amitabha increased dramatically in popularity. See Ch'en's summary (172) of shifts in types of iconography installed at the Lung-men cave-temples between 500 and 720 c.e.

²⁷ See especially T47.79c-80a which borrows T'an-luan's rationale. See also Pruden 1973 and Satō, 619-43.

²⁸ Nonetheless, the motivation and style of lay Pure Land devotionalism survived within the White Lotus sectarian movement of the Southern Sung (1127-1279) and Yuan (1280-1368) periods; see Overmyer, 89-98.

²⁹ T84.33a; Andrews 1973, 44.

³⁰ Ishii, 415-16.

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See *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*

Taishô shinshû daizôkyô

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CHINESE/JAPANESE CHARACTER LIST

ch'ang-hsing san-mei	常行三昧
kuan-fo/kambutsu	觀佛
k'ung-chia-chung/kû-ke-chû	空假中
nan-wu A-mi-t'o fo/namu Amida Butsu	南無阿彌陀佛
nien-fo/nembutsu	念佛
nien-fo san-meि/nembutsu sammai	念佛三昧
shen-hsin	深心
wu-ai kuang	無礙光
wu-nien mén	五念門

VIVEKĀNANDA'S RĀMAKRŚNA: AN UNTOLD STORY OF MYTHMAKING AND PROPAGANDA*

NARASINGHA P. SIL

Summary

The author argues that the familiar Vedāntin and messiah image of Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahāṁsa was created deliberately by his great disciple Svāmī Vivekānanda. The Svāmī's global Hindu evangelical mission called for the master's respectable image. Hence he rejected the sincere rendering of the Paramahāṁsa's biographies by others and, in place of the rustic ecstatic but authentic Gadādhar, fabricated the awesome figure of a modern messiah—the Vedāntin Paramahāṁsa. This paper documents the history of this purposive distortion.

I

The reputation of Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahāṁsa (1836-86) as a living godman—an *īśvarakoti* and an *avatāra*—had been established during his youth, thanks to the efforts of his admiring patron Mathurāmohan Biśvās and his *tāntrik* mentor, the *Bhairavī* Yogeśvarī. Later, the *Brāhma* press of Brahmānanda Keśabcandra Sen publicized the *samādhis* and sermons of the Paramahāṁsa. Toward the end of his life, especially following the diagnosis of his throat cancer in April 1885, the saint himself began to insist on his divinity and this claim of his was widely endorsed by his enthusiastic *bhaktas*, particularly men like Vijayakṛṣṇa Gosvāmī, Giriścandra Ghoṣ, and above all, Rāmacandra Datta, “one of the earliest among the devotees to hold that Sri Ramakrishna was an incarnation of God.”¹

However, the transformation of Rāmakṛṣṇa from a religious ecstatic to a religious eclectic, especially a Vedāntin prophet of the highest caliber, is an interesting development that calls for a closer scrutiny. Of late some researchers have begun to question the deliberate concealment and distortion of the master's speech and behavior to his disciples and devotees.² Not only has Svāmī Nikhilānanda, the distinguished translator of Mahendranāth (M) Gupta's *Śrīśrīrāmakṛṣṇakathāmrta*, been put on the dock for having

committed the academic crime of commission and omission in his *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, even the celebrated M himself has come under fire from the Chicago scholar, Jeffrey J. Kripal.³ Yet the brain behind the fabrication of Rāmakṛṣṇa's modern image was his most favorite and famous disciple, Svāmī Vivekānanda (monastic name of Narendranāth Datta, 1863-1902). This paper seeks to chart the history of this distortion.

II

First of all, we need to take a close and critical look into Narendranāth's religious-spiritual attitudes and academic accomplishments. His biographers agree that as a student Naren was something of a prodigy. Rev. William Hastie, the principal of General Assembly's Institution (later renamed as Scottish Church College), where he studied during 1881-84, reportedly observed: "Narendra is really a genius. I have travelled far and wide but I have never come across a lad of his talents and possibilities, even in German universities, among philosophical students."⁴ He is said to have studied the writings of David Hume, Immanuel Kant, Johann G. Fichte, Baruch Spinoza, Georg W. F. Hegel, Arthur Schopenhauer, Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, John S. Mill, and Charles Darwin. According to Professor Dhar, "among philosophers ... Herbert Spencer was perhaps the greatest favourite." Additionally, we learn that he read some classics in Sanskrit, Bengali, and English. According to some, he was what we might call a "rapid reader", possessed of prodigious memory (*śrutidhara*).⁵ He was quick to learn from scholars such as Pramadadās Mitra of Benares, Pañḍit Sundarlāl of Khetrī or Pañḍit Śaṅkar Pāṇḍurang of Porbandar. In particular, Pañḍit Pāṇḍurang not only taught him Sanskrit grammar and let him study a variety of subjects in his personal library, but also suggested to him the idea that he should preach the Hindu *sanātana dharma* ("eternal religion") and Vedic tradition to the Westerners. The Pañḍit's help and encouragement instilled so much confidence in the young monk that he unhesitatingly told his *gurubhāi* ("monastic cohort"), Svāmī Triguṇātīnanda: "Really, there is so much power in me I feel as though I could revolutionize the world."⁶

Even though, coming as he did from a well-to-do urban family and had an affluent and eventful childhood and adolescence spent in riding, swimming, wrestling, playing with sticks and swords, music,⁷ and playacting, he was, reportedly, also a spiritual minded individual. On his own admission, he began meditating from the age of seven and even told Sister Niveditā (monastic name of Margaret Noble) that he had experienced *samādhi* as an eight year old boy.⁸ He had always been curious to see God and was a worshipper of such Hindu deities as Rāma and Śiva. His spiritual *Angst* as a young man was noted by his senior colleague at college, Brajendranāth Šil. In his article, “An Early State of Vivekananda’s Mental Development,” Šil wrote about the *Sturm und Drang* of young Naren’s soul, the “hour of the darkest trial” of his life prior to his meeting with Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa.⁹

We must, however, note that information on Vivekānanda’s childhood and early youth comes from his devotees and admirers and contemporaries, to whom the Svāmī had described his early life. His remarkable childhood and adolescence have been described in the classic Indian hagiographical style.¹⁰ A problem with such a description is that it is based on Vivekānanda’s personal testimony. Anybody familiar with his writings must admit that he had a penchant for the dithyramb—overstatement with highflown rhetoric and hyperbole. He was also often inconsistent in his various pronouncements. Even his biographer brother recognized that Vivekānanda possessed a “complex character” and his “was a life of striking contrasts and moods of infinite variety...”¹¹

Rev. Hastie’s admiring comments were loving exaggerations at best. Hastie hated Hinduism and Hindus, witness his diatribes against both in his controversy with Baṇkimcandra Caṭṭopādhyāya.¹² His comparison of his favorite student with the best of the German academic philosophers is too frivolous to merit attention. And, as for Šil—who was later to attain eminence as a philosopher—his reminiscences published in *Prabuddha Bhārata* (a journal begun by Vivekānanda’s disciples in Madras) in 1907 were most certainly an encomium for his erstwhile college mate who had died in 1902 an international celebrity.

No doubt, Naren was an intelligent individual capable of creatively appropriating others’ insights and of synthesizing his accumulated knowledge with his own imagination—witness his

highly popular sermons on Hinduism, Vedānta, or Yoga¹³—but he was neither a brilliant scholar nor an accomplished student. He had to take a transfer from the Presidency College (Calcutta), the leading institution of higher learning in India of his day, where he had enrolled after high school, and passed his First Arts and B.A. examinations both in the modest second division. Nagendranāth Gupta has written that Naren “was an average student with no promise of brilliance, because he was not destined to win any prize of the learned or unlearned professions.”¹⁴ Professor Dhar has observed: “Naren did not win any laurels at the university examinations, though during his four years at college, he acquired a considerable scholarship, for which and for his other qualities of head and heart he was admired by his fellow-students and the teachers.”¹⁵ Vivekānanda’s admirer Śīl commented on his “ardent and pure nature,” his sociability, and recognized his musical and forensic skills, but remained silent on his academic achievements. In Śīl’s language, Narendranāth was “an inspired Bohemian ... possessing ... an iron will.”¹⁶ The Svāmī, however, thought of himself primarily as an intellectual. As he claimed: “I was born for the life of scholar—retired, quiet, pouring over books. But the Mother dispenses otherwise—yet the tendency is there.”¹⁷ There is little doubt, however, that he was quick on the uptake of controversial issues, that his trenchant critique of Christian evangelicalism in India was sincere and accurate, and that his generalizations on the history and culture of India and Europe, though not original, were yet informed by wide reading.

III

Narendranāth, we know, was greatly admired by the Paramahāṁsa, who literally doted on the young man with large eyes and in fact lovingly named him Kamalākṣa (“lotus eyed”).¹⁸ Sāradānanda has written about “this strange and strong attraction of the Master for Narendra” and “how intensely the Master regarded Narendranāth as his own and how deeply he loved him from the day he met him first.”¹⁹ Rāmakṛṣṇa’s infatuation for Naren was expressed frequently in his petting the young man’s face and body, shedding tears while seeing him, gazing at him intently

for a long stretch of time, and above all, becoming rigid in *samādhi*.²⁰ No doubt, the aging mystic was fully aware of public reaction to his apparent homoeroticism and he is reported to have confessed: “What will they think on seeing that I, a man of such advanced age, am weeping and panting so much for him? ... But by no means can I control myself.”²¹ In fact he was once reprimanded (though to little effect) by his dauntless devotee, the insufferable Pratāpcandra Hāzrā. As Rāmakṛṣṇa himself reported: “Hazra took me to task because I was anxious to see the boys. He asked ‘When do you think of God?’ ”²² Hāzrā is also reported to have observed that the saint was especially fond of goodlooking and wealthy boys.²³

Needless to mention, Narendranāth, a college student with some acquaintance with Western rationalism and pragmatism, felt scandalized by the bizarre behavior of the “madman” of Dakṣiṇeśvar.²⁴ He, however, felt somewhat obligated to the saint, who was persistent and eloquent in his admiration for the young man. Naren was compared to everything and every being that could be imagined or described in superlatives, and was feasted and feted by his adoring mentor.²⁵ Such attention and adoration as well as the *ambiance* of Dakṣiṇeśvar’s erotic community naturally worked on the teenager. More important, this outburst of infatuation was especially comforting to the restless and hapless youth after his father’s untimely death which had importuned his entire family. Sudden confrontation with the harsh realities of life was quite upsetting, almost traumatic, for the inexperienced but flamboyant young man. We have a graphic account (though we must be cautious as to its exaggerated dimension) of his personal predicament:

I went about hither and thither in search of a job even before the period of mourning was over. Suffering from lack of food and walking barefooted, I went from office to office with an application for a job in my hand in the blazing midday sun But I was disappointed everywhere.²⁶

Unable to cope with the prospect of abject poverty, the shocked college graduate naturally wondered: “Does God actually exist? If so, does He hear the plaintive prayer of man? ... Whence has so much evil come in the creation of a benign Creator?”²⁷ Henceforth he became a regular visitor to Dakṣiṇeśvar, most probably, *inter alia*, to benefit from Rāmakṛṣṇa’s contact with the elites of

Calcutta. Also, his acquaintance with the master at such a moment of torment and doubt proved to be especially helpful, almost therapeutic. Rāmakṛṣṇa had not forgotten the memories of his own childhood trauma after his father's death and he now sympathized with, and came up with a powerful justification for, Naren's present tribulations. One night he told the distraught young man: "Know that you have come to the world for the Mother's work; you can never live a worldly life. But remain in your family for my sake as long as I live."²⁸ It is not clear or certain if Rāmakṛṣṇa actually uttered these words or if Narendranāth actually believed in what his master said, but we know that he made a very good use of Rāmakṛṣṇa's prediction. It is evident that his later career as the great peripatetic Hindu missionary was chosen by default—when the life of a common householder with a normal secular profession seemed well-nigh impossible.²⁹

IV

It is important to bear in mind that Narendranāth did not seem much inclined to spiritualism, mysticism, or devotionalism when he first encountered the Paramahāṁsa. He was frankly opposed to the saint's prescription for total inaction and passive surrender to *Jagajjanāī* ("Mother of the universe")—an appellation of Goddess Kālī—"mew mew" like a kitten profusely and pitiously³⁰—as well as to his anti-intellectualism. His thundering admonition to his monastic brethren against Rāmakṛṣṇa's religious enthusiasm provides a most telling testimony in this regard:

Study, public preaching, and doing humanitarian works are, according to you, Maya! because he said to someone, 'Seek and find God first; doing good to the world especially in the West is a presumption.' As if God is such an easy thing to be achieved! As if He is such a fool as to make Himself a plaything in the hands of the imbecile.³¹

Vivekānanda was also quite lukewarm about Rāmakṛṣṇa's ecstatic enthusiasm. Toward the fag end of his *guru's* life, at the Śyāmpukur residence, Narendranāth openly inveighed against the Paramahāṁsa style of dances and trances indulged in by several eager young devotees of the master. As he boldly asserted,

physical contortions, tears, horripilations, every momentary trance which result from this wrong emotion are, in reality, hypocritical. These should be controlled by a determined effort. If that fails one should take a nutritious diet or even consult a doctor.³²

He disdained mysticism because “these mysticisms, in spite of some grains of truth in them are generally weakening.” He claimed he had come to this conclusion on the basis of his “lifelong experiences of it.”³³ Thus he had little qualms in mimicking and making fun of Rāmakṛṣṇa’s *samādhi* shortly after his death.³⁴ He even preached against Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa worship—something that would have sorely troubled his master. He wrote Rāmakṛṣṇānanda in April 1897:

There is not the least necessity for teaching the divine love of Rādhā and Krishna Remember that the episodes of the divine relationship between Rādhā and Krishna are quite unsuitable for young minds.³⁵

He in fact told Aśvinī Datta at Ālmora sometime in June of that year:

And wherever you hear the Radha-Krishna songs going on, use the whip right and left. The whole nation is going to rack and ruin! People with no self-control indulging in such songs!³⁶

Vivekānanda, likewise, was quite impervious to Rāmakṛṣṇa’s insinuation, even insistence, that the latter possessed *siddhātī* (Bengali corruption of the Sanskrit *siddhi*, meaning “supernatural power”). When once at Dakṣīṇeśvar, the master, overwhelmed by a generous mood and in his characteristic naïvete, offered to transfer his “supernatural” powers to Narendra, the disciple is reported to have declined the offer politely but firmly.³⁷ Narendranāth, of course, cared very little for his master’s magical powers, if any. In 1898 he related to the Holy Mother (Rāmakṛṣṇa’s widow Sāradāmaṇi) how he had suffered from a terrible stomach ache believed to have been caused by the curse of a Moslem mendicant of Kāśmīr. He told her in plain terms: “Your Master could do nothing whatsoever. In fact the Master was nothing.”³⁸

However, toward the end of his life, the Svāmī confided to Śaratcandra Cakrabartī his secret and mysterious experience with Rāmakṛṣṇa who, reportedly, had made Narendranāth sit before him alone and channelled his own energy into the latter by gazing

into his eyes and entering into *samādhi*. This transmission of his *guru*'s power kept him energized for life.³⁹ He succeeded in convincing a young American girl, Frances Bagley Wallace, sometime in February 1894, that he could materialize anywhere he wished. He wrote to another American devotee, Mrs. Sara Bull, that he was endowed with the faculty to "size up" an individual by merely looking at him. He was also believed to have possessed the power to change, "if he so wished, the whole trend of a man's life by his mere touch."⁴⁰

V

In spite of his being a favorite of the master, Narendranāth, initially, remained, unlike Vijayakṛṣṇa Gosvāmī or Girīś Ghoṣ, a devotee with a low profile. The first perceptible change in his stature in Rāmakṛṣṇa's *communio sanctorum* is to be noticed from the time the ailing master was transferred from Dakṣiṇeśvar to Calcutta—first to a rented home at Śyāmpukur (October 1885) and subsequently to the retreat (*bāgānbādi*) at Kāśipur (December 1885). At Śyāmpukur, Naren seems to have emerged as the self-asserted but widely acknowledged leader of Rāmakṛṣṇa's flock.⁴¹ There are numerous episodes, all purportedly based on hearsay or on Vivekānanda's report, showing Narendranāth becoming a spiritual adept, capable, *inter alia*, of *nirvikalpa samādhi*, and the inheritor of Rāmakṛṣṇa's spiritual *thesaurus meritorum*.⁴² He had, of course, already proved his trustworthiness to his master by pretending to recognize the latter's thaumaturgical powers but declining to imbibe them until God-realization.⁴³ Moreover, as Vivekānanda asserted later, his master had actually made him the leader of his disciples.⁴⁴

Though thus mandated by the master, Naren, after Rāmakṛṣṇa's death, revealed the making of a spiritual entrepreneur envisioning the formation of an organization working toward social as well as spiritual reform. By the time he assumed his famous monastic name he had developed his agenda.⁴⁵ As Svāmī Vivekānanda, he decided to present his spiritual master to the world in a new light—not as the divinely mad devotee of Kālī and Kṛṣṇa but as a Vedāntin, the inspiration behind

Vivekānanda's grand plan for Hindu missionary enterprise. Not until 1894 did he decide on Vedānta as the basis for his world mission.⁴⁶ By that year he had arrived at a definite determination in this regard. As he wrote to Rāmakṛṣṇānanda on March 19, 1894:

At Cape Comorin sitting in Mother Kumari's temple, sitting on the last bit of Indian rock—I hit upon a plan: We are so many Sannyasins wandering about and teaching people metaphysics—it is all madness. Did not our Gurudeva use to say, 'An empty stomach is no good for religion'? That these poor people are leading the life of brutes is simply due to ignorance Suppose some distinguished Sannyasins, bent on doing good to others, go from village to village, disseminating education and seeking in various ways to better the condition of all⁴⁷

He was quite explicit three years later. "Do you know what my idea is?" asked the Svāmī of Narendranāth Sen, editor of the *Indian Mirror*, during an interview in 1897 in Calcutta, and then answered his own question:

By preaching the profound secrets of the Vedanta religion in the Western world, we shall attract the sympathy and regard of these mighty nations, maintaining for ever the position of their teacher in spiritual matters, and they will remain our teachers in all material concerns.⁴⁸

This program of social work required a religious inspiration and the Vedānta philosophy with its central emphasis on *das Weltganze* seemed to be the right religion for the upliftment of the people, because it taught that one need not seek the truth outside of oneself and that it underscored the present, the given, and the real that exists in the world.⁴⁹ This Vedānta, the religion for the humanity at large, needed to be associated with Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa, who was depicted as a prophet of the common man. Thus Vivekānanda would have nothing to do with the image of his master as a delirious devotee of God given to singing and swooning. When one of his *gurubhāis* mildly and perhaps jestingly admonished him for having introduced Western ideas of service, organization, and activism in Rāmakṛṣṇa's teachings which disapproved of any kind of social action, the Svāmī exploded:

What do you know? You are an ignorant man ... and you think your salvation is secured and Shri Ramakrishna will come at the final hour and take you by the hand to the highest heaven ... Your Bhakti is sentimental nonsense, which makes one impotent ... Hand off! Who cares for your Bhakti and Mukti? Who cares what your Scriptures say? ... I am not a slave of

Ramakrishna, or anyone, but of him only who serves and helps others, without caring for his own Bhakti or Mukti!⁵⁰

VI

Vivekānanda's personal religious views and social concerns, though based on his master's ministrations, yet were strikingly modern, albeit often ambivalent in minor details. He aspired for a universal religion, that is, "a religion that will be equally acceptable to all minds ... [and] must be equally philosophic, equally emotional, equally mystical, and equally conducive to action."⁵¹ Following his *guru*'s famous formula of *yata mat tata path* ("as many views so many venues"), he declared: "We must learn that truth may be expressed in a hundred thousand ways, and that each of these ways is true as far as it goes."⁵² He, however, favored a practical religion. "I do not believe in God that cannot give bread," roared the "patriot-prophet" of India.⁵³ As a matter of fact, he interpreted the principles of the Vedānta to suit the requirements of his age, his watchword being "dynamic religion and united India."⁵⁴

His practical bent of mind led him to preach equality. He especially espoused the cause of the poor, the downtrodden, and the women. He was highly impressed by the liberty and liberality of Western women who he thought "control[led] social and civic duties." "Do you know who is the real 'Shakti-worshipper'?" he asked Haripada Mitra in a letter from America. "It is he who knows that God is the omnipresent force in the universe and sees in women the manifestation of that Force."⁵⁵ "The mission of Swami Vivekananda," writes Bhūpendranāth Datta, "was to arouse the sleeping Leviathan, that is, Indian society."⁵⁶ This awakening was to be predicated on a comprehensive program of education of the masses, the *gana Nārāyaṇa*, whose upliftment was to be accomplished by "preaching the gospel of salvation, the gospel of equality."⁵⁷

And yet this inspired socialist and Vedāntin was not a diehard ascetic. Even though he remained a monk (*sannyāsī*) throughout his life, he confessed with disarming candor: "Well, I must tell you that I am not a very believer in monastic systems."⁵⁸ He even went to the length of asserting that "asceticism is fiendish" and con-

cluded that “to laugh is better than to pray.”⁵⁹ He once proudly recalled the ancient Hindu society of the beefeating *brāhmins* and advised young men of India to “be strong” so that they could “understand the Gita better with ... biceps.”⁶⁰ No wonder, with such an outlook on beef, biceps, and the *Bhāgavadgītā*, Vivekānanda was regarded as a “Hercules” or a *Pahalwān Svāmī* (“Athlete Svāmī”) by his Western and Eastern admirers.⁶¹

Vivekānanda’s modernity contrasts sharply with the pronounced medievalism of his rustic mentor. Rāmakṛṣṇa considered wealth and women the roots of all evils and hence always counselled against *kāmī-kāñcan*. In real life, however, he depended on a number of women, including his wife Sāradāmaṇi, and on the magnanimity of his wealthy patrons. He also preached against scholarship and social activism. He thought Paṇḍit Īśvarcandra Vidyāsāgara, the famous scholar and social critic, was merely wasting his time trying to reform society. He forbade his devotee and patron Śambhūcaraṇ Mallik to spend money for community development. He advised another devotee that “it is not good to be involved in too many projects.” He admonished his devotees:

You people talk of doing good for the world. Is the world a small place? And who the hell are you to do good to the world? Meet Him by means of spiritual discipline. Realize Him if He gives you the strength, then you can do good to everybody; otherwise not.⁶²

Quite naturally, both the master and his disciple projected a fundamentally different image to their followers. The Paramahāṁsa had been popular as the *pāgal thākur*, the “mad master”—childlike, naive, and unsophisticated. The *Svāmī*, on the other hand, appeared to his admirers as a veritable prince—regal, heroic, intellectual as well as a *mahāyogi* (“great ascetic”).⁶³ Yet there remained common personality traits between the *guru* and his *śiṣya* (“disciple”). Both possessed charisma, charm, and a curious combination of authority and populist appeal. Most important, both were capable of violent mood swings which invested their personality with a mystique that inspired respect and awe in their devotees and admirers. By means of a curious symbiosis, Vivekānanda re-created his master in his own image while also appropriating the style and mannerisms of the Paramahāṁsa.⁶⁴

VII

The new image of Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa was to be built on a reconciliation of his asocial devotionalism to the Svāmī's social activism. The Paramahāṁsa of Vivekānanda's ideal was to be a unique prophet of modern India. Hence Vivekānanda dramatized his experience of altered state of consciousness by his master's touch, interpreted Rāmakṛṣṇa's erotic devotionalism as the purest form of Hindu spirituality, and depicted his caste conscious, androgynous but frankly misogynist mentor as "the Saviour of women, Saviour of the masses, Saviour of all, high and low" as well as declared that he was the greatest of all *avatāras*.⁶⁵ He was convinced that "India can only rise by sitting at the feet of Shri Ramakrishna" and hence "his life and his teachings are to be spread far and wide, are to be made to penetrate every pore of Hindu society."⁶⁶ This absolute necessity for a redeemer figure like his master explains his efforts to discover a new meaning in the Rāmakṛṣṇa phenomenon. He told Niveditā that Rāmakṛṣṇa "lived that great life," and he "read the meaning."⁶⁷ He discovered that the Paramahāṁsa had "spoken of the Vedanta as an all-comprehensive and synthetic religion," which he was preaching.⁶⁸ And that was not all. Vivekānanda now claimed:

Avataras like Buddha and Chaitanya are monotonous; Ramakrishna Paramahamsa is the latest and the most perfect—the concentrated embodiment of knowledge, love, renunciation, catholicity, and the desire to save mankind.⁶⁹

Upon his return from the West, he declared at a massive gathering in Calcutta on February 28, 1897:

Through thousands of years of chiselling and modelling, the lives of the great prophets of yore came down to us; and yet, in my opinion, not one stands so high in brilliance as that life which I saw with my own eyes, under whose shadow I have lived, at whose feet I have learnt everything—the life of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa.⁷⁰

The new Rāmakṛṣṇa was not to be the conventional godman—or even a godlike man, as he had once regarded the master over a decade ago⁷¹—but to project the image of a godly and saintly superman. This delicate balancing of the traditional *avatāra* image with the modern prophet motif informed Vivekānanda's interpretation

and propagation of his *guru*'s message in the world. Though he recognized the political value for an *avatāra* in a religious movement, he publicly announced his disapproval of such "orthodoxy" as belief in an incarnation.⁷² He in fact clearly told Prasannakumār Śāstrī in 1899 that he did not "preach that the Master was an avatar."⁷³ His ideal godman and prophet was a militant mystic—an amalgam of a *yogī* ("saint") and a *kṣatriya* ("soldier"). A recent study shows how he was influenced, *inter alia*, by Thomas Carlyle's "Great Man" idea.⁷⁴ His ideas in this regard were articulated in his letter of June 20, 1894 to Dewān Haridās Deśāi:

It is a character, a life, a centre, a God-man that must lead the way, ... That centre, that God-man to lead ... was the great Ramakrishna Paramahansa....⁷⁵

VIII

Vivekānanda's quest for a special image of his master led him to criticize the extant biographies of Rāmakṛṣṇa. His reaction to the biographies published in the 1890s was far from favorable. He was particularly vehement in his denunciation of his cousin Rāma Datta's *Śrīśrīrāmakṛṣṇadeber Jībanbrttānta* (1890). As he complained in his letter of November 30, 1894 to Alasinga Perumal, his most important disciple in Madras:

What nonsense about the miracle of Ramakrishna! ... Had Ramakrishna nothing to do but turning wine into the Gupta's medicine [alluding to the popular herbal preparation patented in Calcutta by D. Gupta & Co.]? Lord save me from such people! What materials to work with! If they can write a real life of Shri Ramakrishna with the idea of showing what he came to do and teach, let them do it, otherwise let them not distort his life and sayings I read a Bengali life sent over I am simply ashamed of the Bengali book ... *Bosh and rot.*⁷⁶

He was, however, quite appreciative of Akṣayakumār Sen's biography of Rāmakṛṣṇa in verse, *Śrīśrīrāmakṛṣṇapunthi* (1894).⁷⁷ As he wrote to Svāmī Rāmakṛṣṇānanda in 1895 from the United States:

Just now I read Akshaya's Book. Give him a hundred thousand hearty embraces from me. Through his pen Shri Ramakrishna is manifesting himself. Blessed is Akshaya! Let him recite that *Punthi* before all If the work be too large, let him read extracts of it. I cannot tell in words the joy I have experienced by reading his book. Try all of you to give the book an extensive sale.

Sen was an intimate friend of Vivekānanda, who nicknamed the homely looking Akṣaya śāṅkcunī (“goblin”).⁷⁸ The *Puṇthi*'s primary appeal for the Svāmī lay most probably in its delightful *payār* (“rhyme”) so dear to the Bengalis. But the substance or message of the work could not measure up to Vivekānanda's taste. He noticed that “there is no glorification of the *Shakti* at the opening which is a great defect.” He instructed Rāmakṛṣṇānanda to ask the author to “bear in mind that we are now standing before the gaze of the world, and that people are watching every one of our actions and utterances.”⁷⁹

Vivekānanda's emphasis on *sakti*, the female power, was the outcome of his experiences with the American women. He not only found them “very beautiful” so that “even the most beautiful woman of our country will look like a black owl here,” but also possessed of divine attributes.⁸⁰ In his characteristic rhetoric, the awestruck young monk wrote to his brother disciples from New York on September 25, 1894:

They are like Lakshmi ... in beauty, and like Sarasvati in virtues—they are the Divine Mother incarnate and worshipping them, one verily attains perfection in everything.⁸¹

The Westerners are rich and strong because “the Dharma of the Westerners is worship of Shakti—the Creative Power regarded as the Female Principle.”⁸²

Thus Vivekānanda offered some editorial suggestions for refining Sen's *Puṇthi*. To quote from his letter to Rāmakṛṣṇānanda, once again:

Ask Akshaya to write these few points in the third section of his book, “The Propagation of the Faith.”

1. Whatever the Vedas, the Vedanta, and all other Incarnations have done in the past, Shri Ramakrishna lived to practise in the course of a single life.
2. One cannot understand the Vedas, the Vedanta, the Incarnations, and so forth, without understanding *his* life. For he was the explanation.
3. From the very day he was born, has sprung the Satya-Yuga (Golden Age). Henceforth there is an end to all sorts of distinctions, and everyone down to the Chandāla will be a sharer in the Divine Love. The distinction between man and woman, between the rich and the poor, the literate and illiterate, Brahmins and Chandals—he lived to root out all. And he was the harbinger of Peace—the separation between Hindus and Mohammedans, between Hindus and Christians, all are now things of the past. That fight about

distinction that there was, belonged to another era. In this Satya-Yuga the tidal wave of Shri Ramakrishna's Love has unified all.

Tell him to expand these ideas and write them in his own style.⁸³

Like Akṣaya, even M could not help being nicked by the horns of the charging bull of a critic. It must be noted that Vivekānanda had enthusiastically applauded M's enterprise a few years before he made his sojourn to America. In a letter dated February 7, 1889, from Āntpur (Bengal), Narendranāth had written: "Thanks! 100000 Master! You have hit Ramkristo in the right point. Few alas, few understand him!"⁸⁴ But when he read M's own translation of his diary as *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* in 1896, probably in manuscript form before its printing in 1897, he did not like the stuff Mahendranāth had written. In his letter of April 14, 1896 Vivekānanda wrote to Svāmī Triguṇātītānanda:

That Ramakrishna was God and all that sort of thing, has no go in countries like this [U.S.A.]. M—has a tendency to put that stuff down everybody's throat, but that will make our movement a little sect.⁸⁵

However, the Svāmī executed a *volte face* next year. In October 1897 he wrote from Rawalpindi:

Dear M. *C'est bon ami*—Now you are doing just the thing. Come out man. No sleeping all life. Time is flying. Bravo that is the way. Many many thanks for your publication⁸⁶

Again, in November of that year, he wrote to applaud M's second part of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*:

My dear 'M.' Many thanks for your second leaflet (leaves from the *Gospel*). It is indeed wonderful. The move is quite original and never was the life of a great Teacher brought before the public untarnished by the writer's mind, as you are presenting this one. The language also is beyond all praise, so fresh, so pointed, and withal so plain and easy. I cannot express in adequate terms how I have enjoyed the leaflets. I am really in a transport when I read them! Strange, isn't it? Our Teacher and Lord was so original, and each one of us will have to be original or nothing. I now understand why none of us attempted his life before. It has been reserved for you, this great work.

In a postscript the ebullient Vivekānanda added another comment on M's *Gospel*:

The Socratic dialogues are Plato all over; you are entirely hidden. Moreover, the dramatic part is infinitely beautiful. Everybody likes it here and in the West.⁸⁷

Even when the Svāmī found a work on the life and *logia* of his master quite acceptable in all essentials, he still noticed something in it to cavil at, as was the case with Sureścandra Datta's collection of Rāmakṛṣṇa's sayings in Bengali, *Śrīrāmakṛṣṇadeber Upadeś* (1886), which contained a short but comprehensive biography of the master titled *Śrīśrīrāmkṛṣṇalilā*. Commenting on this work, Vivekānanda wrote to Rāmakṛṣṇānanda in 1895: "Suresh Dutta's object is noble; his book, too, is well written. It will bring some good, no doubt. However, how far have they been able to fathom Sri Ramakrishna?"⁸⁸

The Bengalis, thus, disappointed the Svāmī, as none of them could write an "original" piece, that is, one which would depict Rāmakṛṣṇa as a dignified and enlightened reformer acceptable and respectable throughout the world. He considered the Madrasis as "at least far superior to the Bengalis, who are simply fools and have no souls, no stamina at all."⁸⁹ "I have all hope in Madras," Vivekānanda confided to his south Indian follower Alasinga, in a letter of November 30, 1894. His expressed reliance on his south Indian devotees in November had been preceded five months ago by his disappointment with Alasinga and his crew. On June 28, 1894 the Svāmī had complained against Alasinga's effort to link up Vivekānanda's teachings with those of the Theosophists. In sheer disgust he had written: "What nonsense does Alasinga mean ... Fool! ... And this pack of Madras babies cannot even keep a counsel in their blessed noodles! Talk nonsense all day, and when it comes to the least business, they are nowhere!"⁹⁰ However, now he suggested to Alasinga that Kidi (nickname of Singaravelu Mudaliar, another south Indian disciple) write a biography of Rāmakṛṣṇa.

He even prescribed the parameters for such a study:

The life of Shri Ramakrishna was an extraordinary searchlight under whose illumination one is able to really understand the whole scope of Hindu religion. He was the object-lesson of all the theoretical knowledge given in the Shāstras (scriptures). He showed by his life what the Rishis and Avatāras really wanted to teach The Vedas can only be explained and the Shāstras reconciled by his theory of Avasthā or stages—that we must not only tolerate others, but positively embrace them, and that truth is the basis of all religions.

He especially cautioned Alasinga to

avoid all irregular indecent expressions about sex etc., because other nations think it the height of indecency to mention such things, and his life in English is going to be read by the whole world.⁹¹

Vivekānanda wrote to Kidi on the same day:

Take thought, get materials, write a sketch of Ramakrishna, *studiously avoiding all miracles*. The life should be written as an illustration of the doctrines he preached.⁹²

Soon he was disenchanted again with his south Indian hopefus. In the same year, in a letter to his monastic brethren in Calcutta, the Svāmī lamented:

Of course I never relied on the Bengalis, but the Madrasis couldn't do anything either ... not one original idea crosses anyone's brains, all fighting over the same old, threadbare rug—that Ramakrishna Paramahamsa was such and such and cock-and-bull stories—stories having neither head nor tail Today you have your bell, tomorrow you add a horn, and follow suit with a chowry the day after; or you introduce a cot today, and tomorrow you have its legs silver-mounted, and people help themselves to a rice-porridge, and you spin out two thousand cock-and-bull stories This is called in English imbecility.

In the postscript, the writer observed: "It won't do merely to call Shri Ramakrishna an Incarnation, you must manifest power."⁹³

Vivekānanda's double disappointment in respect of a model biography of his master could be partly explained. Most probably, he found the Bengali works full of *verbatim* reproduction of Rāmakṛṣṇa's sermons in *patois*, often full of crude and obscene expressions as well as innocent and uncritical reports, including eyewitness accounts, of the master's *ati bhayānaka* ("very scary") and *atīva bhayaṇikara* ("extremely horrible") *sādhanās* ("spiritual exercises") with the *bhairavī brāhmaṇī* as well as his intimate encounters with Mathurāmohan.⁹⁴ Certainly he felt uncomfortable with any reference to Rāmakṛṣṇa's obsession with Narendranāth. He admonished his brother monks at Ālambāzār for having published the late Paramahāṁsa's loving remarks on him. "What made you communicate to the *Indian Mirror* that Paramahamsa Deva used to call Narendra such and such, and all sorts of nonsense," wrote the angry and exasperated Svāmī.⁹⁵ His dislike for the works by the south Indians stemmed probably from the fact that these depicted Rāmakṛṣṇa in the conventional *motif* of the Indian hagiographical tradition. The Bengali works were embar-

rassing while the Madrasī ones dull and both eminently *unoriginal*!

It is quite possible that Sāradānanda's *Lilāprasaṅga* was influenced by Vivekānanda's ideas and suggestions. Indeed, the Preface to its third part clearly states that the author,

following in the footsteps of Swami Vivekananda, attempted in this book a description of that unique life ... with a view to depict that exalted state of the Master's mind (Bhava), the realization of a little of which has made Swami Vivekananda and others, including ourselves, dedicate their lives at the lotus feet of the Master.⁹⁶

It is also quite likely that M dared not publish his *Kathāmrta* during Vivekānanda's lifetime.⁹⁷ Nīkhilānanda's concern for projecting the right image of the Paramahārīsa was most certainly inspired by the ideas of Vivekānanda whom he greatly admired.⁹⁸ Most probably the real reason for his praising the second part of M's own translation of his *Kathāmrta* as the *Gospel* was the fact it partly reflected (in M's commentaries) Vivekānanda's ideas of a godman.

IX

Sometime in 1896 or 1897 Sāradānanda asked Vivekānanda why the latter had not written Rāmakṛṣṇa's biography for Professor Max Müller. The Svāmī replied in his characteristic dithyramb:

I have such deep feeling for the Master that it is impossible for me to write about him for the public. If I had written the article Max Muller wanted, then I would have proved, quoting from philosophies, the scriptures and even the holy books of the Christians, that Ramakrishna was the greatest of all prophets born in the world.⁹⁹

And he did write about the Paramahārīsa. As early as 1895 he had informed Brahmānanda:

I am going to write a very short sketch of Shri Ramakrishna's life in English, which I shall send you. Have it printed and translated into Bengali and sell it at the festival [Rāmakṛṣṇa Festival]—people do not read books that are distributed free. Fix some nominal price. Have the festival done with great pomp¹⁰⁰

Though this biography is short, it is shot through with the author's very personalized interpretation of Rāmakṛṣṇa's teachings and teachings and his claims on behalf of the Rāmakṛṣṇa phenomenon.¹⁰¹ In many respects, this short biography is original in its interpretation of Rāmakṛṣṇa's contributions. It is not

Sāradānanda's *Great Master* but Vivekānanda's *My Master* which is familiar throughout the world, and *My Master* is Vivekānanda all over.

Rāmakṛṣṇa's new image was further refined in the Svāmī's lecture, "The Sages of India", delivered in Madras on February 11, 1897. As he declared, the Paramahāṁsa combined the

brilliant intellect of Shankara and the wonderfully expansive, infinite heart of Chaitanya; one who would see God in every being, one whose heart would weep for the poor, for the weak, for the outcast, for the downtrodden, for every one in this world, inside India or outside India; and at the same time whose grand brilliant intellect would conceive of such noble thoughts as would harmonise all conflicting sects, not only in India but outside of India, and bring a marvellous harmony, the universal religion of head and heart into existence ... [T]his great intellect never learnt even to write his own name, but the most brilliant graduates of our university found in him an intellectual giant. He was a strange man, this Shri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa.¹⁰²

Vivekānanda's inspired hyperbole in respect of his master was at its best in his claim made in 1901: "It is my opinion that Shri Ramakrishna was born to vivify all branches of art and culture in this country."¹⁰³

X

Since Vivekānanda's days, the life and *logia* of the Paramahāṁsa have been written and interpreted by a variety of researchers both in India and abroad. Almost all the biographies of Rāmakṛṣṇa have relied upon the interpretation of the master's life provided by the Rāmakṛṣṇa Order founded by Vivekānanda. One of the Svāmī's *Brāhma* contemporaries, Krṣṇakumār Mitra, astutely observed: "It is true that Narendranath became the disciple of Ramakrishna, but the disciple made his guru 'unsectarian'."¹⁰⁴ The much publicized Paramahāṁsa is not only the greatest incarnation who ever descended on earth but also the patron saint of renascent India. The projection of Rāmakṛṣṇa as the universal redeemer was made in total disregard of the master's pronounced casteism and misogyny.¹⁰⁵

On the other hand, Ṭhākur Rāmakṛṣṇa of the householder disciples such as Mahendranāth Gupta or Rāmacandra Datta, while trapped in the ivory tower of divinity, still has a human

face—an unsophisticated bucolic *brāhmaṇin* and a semi-literate ecstatic possessed of charming simplicity and naivete.¹⁰⁶ The authentic god-mad Gadādhara—neither a social reformer nor a Vedāntin nor even a *tāntrika* in any meaningful sense but an enthusiastic *bhakta*, a *sahajīyā* at best—was transformed into a modern prophet.¹⁰⁷ If Rāmakṛṣṇa appeared as a mere *bhagabān* (“God”) to most of his devotees and disciples, he had become something more—*bhagabāner bābā* (literally meaning “God’s father”), greater than God—at the hands of the “cyclonic” Svāmī.¹⁰⁸ Vivekānanda once confessed:

I am Ramakrishna’s servant, and I am willing even to steal and rob, if by doing so I can perpetuate his name in the land of his birth and Sādhanā (spiritual struggle) and help even a little his disciples to practise his great ideals.¹⁰⁹

And he succeeded! Indeed there is a good deal of justification in the Svāmī’s boast to his *gurubhāis*:

Without me, who would have made your Master known to the world!¹¹⁰

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¹ Swami Prabhānanda, *First Meetings with Sri Ramakrishna* (Mylapore: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1987), p. 134.

² See Narasingha P. Sil, *Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahāṁsa: A Psychological Profile* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), chs. V & VII.

³ J. J. Kripal, “Revealing and Concealing the Secret: A Textual History of Mahendranath Gupta’s *Śrīśrīrāmakṛṣṇakathāmṛta*,” Clinton B. Seely, ed. *Calcutta, Bangladesh, and Bengal Studies* (Asian Studies Center: Michigan State University, 1991). See also M (Mahendranāth Gupta), *Śrīśrīrāmakṛṣṇakathāmṛta*, 5 *bhāgas* (1902-32. Rpt. Kalikātā: Kathāmrta Bhavana, 1987), henceforth cited as *KM*; Swami Nikhilananda, *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (1942. Seventh printing. New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1984).

⁴ Sailendranath Dhar, *A Comprehensive Biography of Swami Vivekananda*, 3 vols. in 2 pts. (Madras: Vivekananda Prakashan Kendra, 1975-76). I, 52 (henceforth cited as *CB*).

⁵ Ibid., pp. 53, 59. His translation of Spencer’s *On Education* was published by Gurudās Caṭṭopādhyā of Calcutta. He also translated Thomas à Kempis’ *Imita-*

tion of Christ in Bengali. See also Bhupendranath Datta, *Swami Vivekananda Patriot-Prophet: A Study* (Calcutta: Nababharat Publishers, 1954), p. 154 n. 8.

⁶ *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, 8 vols. (Mayavati Memorial edn. Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1990), V, letter # 2; VI, letters # 8, 9 (hereafter cited as *CW*); *CB*, I, 328. Though Vivekānanda's knowledge of the Vedānta and other Hindu scriptures owed a good deal to the help from Mitra, there developed some bitterness in the relationships between the veteran scholar and the young monk. Mitra considered belief in Rāmakṛṣṇa's *avatārahood* a "perversion" and Vivekānanda found Mitra's intimacy with the "white-skinned missionaries of the Hindu religion ... repelling." *Ibid.*, I, 292-93. Vivekānanda also borrowed many books from Dr. Śāśibhūṣan Sānyāl, Alasinga Perumal, and E. T. Sturdy. *CW*, V, letters # 39, 68; VI, letter # 59 & VIII, letter # 68.

⁷ Narendra learned classical vocal music from maestros such as Beṇī Ostād and Kāśī Ghoṣāl. He authored a short guidebook on *tablā* (percussion instrument) playing and it was published by Baisnāvacandra Basāk of Baṭtalā, Calcutta. *Patriot-Prophet*, p. 155.

⁸ *CB*, I, 40. This, somewhat interestingly, parallels the first childhood trance of his master, Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa. Swami Saradananda, *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master (Śrīśrīramakṛṣṇalilāprasāṅga)*, tr. Swami Jagadananda, 2 vols. (Sixth rev. edn. Mylapore: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1983-84), I, 55-56 (henceforth referred to as *GM*).

⁹ *CB*, I, 85. Narendranāth met Rāmakṛṣṇa for the first time at the residence of his friend Surendranāth (*alias* Sureś) Mitra sometime in the first week of November 1881. He first visited the saint's abode at Dakṣiṇeśvar on January 15, 1882.

¹⁰ A pioneering study calling for the need to distinguish "the historical Swami Vivekananda" from "the archetype of Vivekananda as the Hindu spiritual hero" is by George M. Williams ("Swami Vivekananda: Archetypal Hero or Doubting Saint" in Robert D. Baird, ed. *Religion in Modern India*, Delhi: Manohar, 1981). See also Charles S. J. White, "The Sāī Bābā Movement: Approaches to the Study of Indian Saints," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, XXXI, 4 (1972).

¹¹ *Patriot-Prophet*, p. 265.

¹² Tapan Raychaudhuri, *Europe Reconsidered: Perception of the West in Nineteenth Century Bengal* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 8 (see also ch. III, 103-218).

¹³ See Marie L. Burke, *Swami Vivekananda in the West. New Discoveries. A New Gospel*, 2 pts. (Third edn. Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1980), II, 1-107.

¹⁴ His Eastern & Western Admirers, *Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda* (1961. Third edn. Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1983), p. 3.

¹⁵ *CB*, I, 51.

¹⁶ His Eastern & Western Disciples, *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, 2 vols. (revised & enlarged fifth edn. Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1979-81), I, 107-11. John A. Bright of Harvard remarked, somewhat exaggeratedly, that Vivekānanda's learning "matched that of all the professors of his university put together." *CB*, II, 1443.

¹⁷ *CW*, VI, letter # 125: letter to Sister Niveditā, June 3, 1897.

¹⁸ Romain Rolland, *The Life of Vivekananda and the Universal Gospel*, tr. E. F. Malcolm-Smith (Tenth impression. Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1984), p. 8 n. 11.

¹⁹ *GM* II, 854-55.

²⁰ Sil, *Rāmakṛṣṇa*, ch. IV.

²¹ *GM*, II, 857.

²² *Life of Vivekananda*, I, 90.

²³ *KM*, IV, 230 (diary of July 15, 1885).

²⁴ *Life of Vivekananda*, I, 76-78.

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 76-77, 87-88, 92; *KM*, IV, 228 (diary of July 15, 1885). All quotations from the *KM* are my translation.

²⁶ *GM*, II, 922.

²⁷ Cited ibid., p. 924.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 927.

²⁹ It is not clear why, in spite of Narendranāth's reputation as an allrounder, coupled with the fact that his father had built up a social as well as professional circle, he failed to procure an employment.

³⁰ *KM*, II, 69.

³¹ *CB*, II, 956.

³² *The Life of Swami Vivekananda* (1912. Fourth edn. Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, 1949), p. 126. In the two-volume fifth edition (see n. 16 above) Vivekānanda's statement has been edited and paraphrased (I, 156).

³³ *CW*, III, 225.

³⁴ *KM*, IV, 298 (diary of February 21, 1887).

³⁵ *CW*, VIII, letter #90.

³⁶ *Life of Vivekananda*, II, 354.

³⁷ *GM*, II, 909-10.

³⁸ Swami Gambhirananda, *Holy Mother, Sri Sarada Devi* (Third edn. Mylapore: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1977), pp. 182-83.

³⁹ Rolland, *Vivekananda*, pp. 127-28 n. 2.

⁴⁰ See *CB*, I, 497-503: "Swamiji's Psychic Powers."

⁴¹ See *Life of Vivekananda*, I, 149-86.

⁴² Ibid., pp. 177-83.

⁴³ See n. 37 above. See also Sil, *Rāmakṛṣṇa*, p. 159.

⁴⁴ *CW*, VII, letter #32. In his letter of May 1890 to Pramadadās Mitra, Vivekānanda wrote: "I am Ramakrishna's slave; having laid my body at his feet 'with Til and Tulsi leaves', I cannot disregard his behest His command was that his all-renouncing devotees should group themselves together and I am entrusted with seeing to this." Ibid., VI, letter #33. See also *Life of Vivekananda*, I, 182.

⁴⁵ According to Beni S. Sharma, Narendranāth's monastic name Vivekānanda was proposed by Rajā Ajit Singh of Khetrī (*Swami Vivekananda: A Forgotten Chapter of His Life*, Calcutta: Oxford Book & Stationery Co., 1963, chs. III & IV). The controversy surrounding the question who first suggested it or when Narendra first used it has been competently summarized in *CB*, I, 401-2.

⁴⁶ Marie L. Burke, *Swami Vivekananda in the West. New Discoveries. His Prophetic Mission*, 2 pts. (Third edn. Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1983-84), II, 383-93. For Vivekānanda's plan for Vedāntic movement see *CW*, I, 383-92 ("Vedanta as a Factor in Civilisation"); III, 207-27 ("My Plan of Campaign"); V, 188-94 ("India's Mission"); VII, 411-12 ("Shri Ramakrishna: The Significance of His Life and Teachings"); VIII, 73-91 ("My Life and Mission").

⁴⁷ *CW*, VI, letter #41.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 448.

⁴⁹ See *CW*, VIII, 122-41 ("Is Vedanta the Future Religion"?).

⁵⁰ Cited in Rolland, *Life of Vivekananda*, pp. 124-26.

⁵¹ *Vivekananda: The Yogas and Other Works*, ed. Swami Nikhilananda (1953. Third printing. New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1984), p. 394: "The Ideal of a Universal Religion" (New York, January 12, 1896).

⁵² Ibid., p. 391: "The Way to the Realization of the Universal Religion" (January 28, 1900).

⁵³ *Patriot-Prophet*, p. 227.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 275.

⁵⁵ *CW*, V, letter #6 (letter of December 28, 1893).

⁵⁶ *Patriot-Prophet*, p. 197.

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 216-17.

⁵⁸ *CW*, VIII, 89: speech in Pasadena (January 27, 1900).

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 227: lecture in London (November 23, 1895).

⁶⁰ *CW*, III, 174 (reply to the address of welcome at Madurai), 242 ("Vedanta and its Application to Indian Life").

⁶¹ *Life of Vivekananda*, I, 368. V. Subramanya of Madras called Vivekānanda *Pahalwān Svāmī*. Rolland called him Hercules. *Life of Vivekananda*, p. 6 n. 3.

⁶² *KM*, I, 50-1 (diary of October 27, 1882).

⁶³ See Burke, *Vivekananda in West. Prophetic Mission*, pts. I & II, *passim*; *Reminiscences of Vivekananda*, especially the contributions by Sister Christine, Sister Niveditā, Madame E. Calvé, E. T. Sturdy.

⁶⁴ See Sil, *Rāmakṛṣṇa*, p. 158.

⁶⁵ *CW*, VI, 335 (letter #75: letter to Svāmī Rāmakṛṣṇānanda from the U.S.A., c. 1895). See also Vivekānanda, *Abhimat* ("Opinion") in Akṣayakumār Sen, *Śrīrāmakṛṣṇapūrṇi: Śrīrāmakṛṣṇadeber Caritāṁṛta* (Eighth edn. Kalikātā: Udbodhan Kāryālaya, 1378 Bengali Era).

⁶⁶ *CW*, VI, letter #51.

⁶⁷ His Disciple Nivedita, *The Master as I Saw Him: Being Pages from the Life of Swami Vivekananda* (London: Longman, Green & CO., 1910), p. 255.

⁶⁸ *Life of Vivekananda*, II, 354.

⁶⁹ *CW*, VII, letter #25.

⁷⁰ *CW*, III, 313.

⁷¹ *KM*, I, 253 (diary of October 27, 1885).

⁷² *CB*, II, 1018. See also Niranjan Dhar, *Vedanta and Bengal Renaissance* (Calcutta: Minerva Associates, 1977), p. 129.

⁷³ *CB*, II, 955.

⁷⁴ Thomas L. Bryson, "The Cyclonic Hindu: Swami Vivekananda," paper presented at the American Academy of Religion Conference, Kansas City (November 23-26, 1991). I thank Jeff Kripal for having mailed me a copy of this paper.

⁷⁵ *CW*, VIII, letter #20.

⁷⁶ *CW*, V, letter #22 (*italics* in original).

⁷⁷ See n. 65 above. Sen originally composed *Bhagabān Śrīśrīrāmakṛṣṇa Paramahāmsadeber Caritāṁṛta* during 1894-1901. He publicly recited from the *Śrīśrīrāmakṛṣṇapūrṇi* for the first time in 1895 at Dakṣineśvar on the occasion of Rāmakṛṣṇa's birth anniversary. He sent a copy of this version of the *Pūrṇi* to Vivekānanda. Later, on November 25, 1901, this *Pūrṇi* was published, incorporating all the four parts of the *Caritāṁṛta*.

⁷⁸ Swami Chetanananda, *They Lived with God: Life Stories of Some Devotees of Sri Ramakrishna* (St. Louis: Vedanta Society, 1989), p. 374.

⁷⁹ CW, VI, letter #75.

⁸⁰ CW, VII, letter #23.

⁸¹ CW, VI, letter #47.

⁸² CW, V, 505: "The East and the West."

⁸³ See n. 79 above.

⁸⁴ Cited in KM, V, 287.

⁸⁵ CW, VI, letter #97.

⁸⁶ Cited in KM, V, 287.

⁸⁷ CW, V, letter #82.

⁸⁸ Cited in Prabhānanda, *First Meeting with Ramakrishna*, p. 252 n. 23.

⁸⁹ CW, VIII, letter #21.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ See n. 76 above.

⁹² *Letters of Swami Vivekananda* (Sixth impression. Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1986), p. 71 (letter #29). Emphasis in original. Puzzlingly enough, CW omits this important letter of Vivekānanda.

⁹³ CW, VI, letter #45.

⁹⁴ The most "scandalous" biography of Rāmakṛṣṇa containing the lurid details of his *sādhanā* as well as his quite suggestive encounters with his patron Mathur was Datta's *Jibārbṛittānta*. See J. J. Kripal, "Vivekananda and Ram Chandra Datta: An Early Conflict over the Person and Message of Ramakrishna," paper presented at the Fourth International Congress of Vedanta, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio (April 2-5, 1992).

⁹⁵ CW, VI, letter #56. It is on record that he hesitated to discuss Rāmakṛṣṇa's life confessing that he did not quite understand his *guru*. See Śaratcandra Cakrabarti, *Svāmī-śiṣya Saṁbād*, p. 146 cited in Raychaudhuri, *Europe Reconsidered*, p. 242.

⁹⁶ GM, I, 366.

⁹⁷ The *Prathama Bhāga* ("First Part") of the KM was published in 1902, the year Vivekānanda died.

⁹⁸ See Nikhilananda's Preface to *Gospel of Ramakrishna* (see n. 3 above). See also J. J. Kripal, "Kālī's Child: The Mystical and the Erotic in Mahendranath Gupta's Śrīśrīrāmakṛṣṇakathāmṛta," Ph.D. dissertation in preparation (University of Chicago). I thank Jeff for having shared with me an early draft of the Introduction.

⁹⁹ Cited in Swami Nikhilananda, *Vivekananda: A Biography* (1953. Second Indian edn. Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1971), pp. 193-94.

¹⁰⁰ CW, VI, letter #71.

¹⁰¹ CW, IV, 154-87: "My Master."

¹⁰² Ibid., pp. 267-68. Cf. Vivekānanda's conversation with Śaratcandra Cakrabartī: "First we must raise the whole Hindu race in this way and then the whole world. That is why Shri Ramakrishna incarnated." CW, VII, 171. Vivekānanda was wrong in making Rāmakṛṣṇa a completely illiterate man. Perhaps the misstatement was made deliberately for rhetorical effect. In actuality, however, Rāmakṛṣṇa could and did sign his name. He also, reportedly, copied a portion of Kṛttivāsa's *Rāmāyaṇa*. Swami Ramakrishnananda, *Sri Ramakrishna and His Mission* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1972), p. 14.

¹⁰³ CW, VII, 205: Vivekānanda's conversation with Raṇadāprasād Dāsgupta, the founder of the Jubilee Art Academy, Calcutta.

¹⁰⁴ Cited in *Patriot-Prophet*, p. 178.

¹⁰⁵ See Sil, *Rāmakṛṣṇa*, especially chs. II & III. A typical sample of the popular image of *Rāmakṛṣṇa*, which is universally held by devotees and admirers alike, is to be found in the statement made by independent India's first Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in 1949. Speaking on the occasion of the 114th birth anniversary of the master at the Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi, Pandit Nehru declared that "men like Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, men like Swami Vivekananda and men like Mahatma Gandhi are great unifying forces, great constructive geniuses of the world ... not only in regard to the particular teachings that they taught, but their approach to the world and their conscious and unconscious influence on it is of the most vital importance to us." Pandit J. Nehru, *Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda* (Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, 1949), pp. 13-14. The last sentence in the above quote must have been inspired by Vivekānanda's characterization of the Paramaharīsa: "He is the method, that wonderful unconscious method!" Nivedita, *Master as I Saw Him*, p. 255.

¹⁰⁶ Sil, *Rāmakṛṣṇa*, chs. VII & VIII. See also Kripal's paper cited in n. 94 above.

¹⁰⁷ Very few scholars, since Friedrich Max Müller's days, are prepared to regard Rāmakṛṣṇa as a Vedāntin. Sil, *Rāmakṛṣṇa*, pp. 97-98. Walter G. Neevel ("The Transformation of Sri Ramakrishna," Bardwell L. Smith, ed. *Hinduism: New Essays in the History of Religion*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976) argues that Rāmakṛṣṇa's basic orientation was *tāntrika*. He is powerfully supported by Kripal (see all his works cited above). For a contrary view see Sil, *Rāmakṛṣṇa*, chs. VI-VIII.

¹⁰⁸ Svāmī Prameyānanda *et al.*, eds. *Biśvacetanā Śrīrāmkṛṣṇa* (Kalikātā: Udbodhan Kāryālaya, 1987), p. 28. Once the Svāmī compared Rāmakṛṣṇa with Lord Kṛṣṇa and commented that "even where Krishna failed to show a complete reconciliation (*samanvaya*) among the warring sects, it was fully accomplished by Ramakrishna Paramahamsa in the nineteenth century." Swami Vivekananda, *Sri Ramakrishna as Swamiji Saw Him* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1974), p. 20. The journalists of Detroit called Vivekānanda "cyclonic Hindu" for his eloquent and forceful lectures. Burke, *Vivekananda in West. Prophetic Mission*, I, 431.

¹⁰⁹ *CW*, VI, letter #33.

¹¹⁰ Cited in *CB*, II, 955.

A REPORT ON THE "INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC
CONFERENCE ON RELIGION," BEIJING, APRIL 6-10, 1992

CHRISTIAN JOCHIM

The International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR) was especially pleased to hold a conference for the first time in China, the second time in Asia (as an IAHR International Congress was held in Tokyo in 1958). The IAHR aims to be a truly international organization and has been very supportive in recent years of the nascent discipline of Religious Studies in the People's Republic of China (PRC). In this report, I would like to introduce the conference's organizers and participants, its academic content, and its overall nature.

Organizers and Participants

The Chinese organizers were from the Institute of World Religions (IWR) of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the Chinese Association of Religious Studies (CARS), Beijing. IWR was founded in 1964, but has been much more active since the late 1970's. Since that time it has accepted 40 students into its M.A. and Ph.D. programs; and it has helped to establish the first faculty in religious studies at a Chinese university (Beijing University, Philosophy Department). CARS, founded in 1988, is an academic affiliate of the IAHR for scholars all over China. According to its constitution:

The association is a nationwide nonofficial academic organization of researchers on religions. Guided by the principles of Integrating Theory with Practice and Letting a Hundred Schools of Thought Contend, the association will play an active role in arranging academic exchanges and activities both at home and abroad, so as to develop and promote religious studies, thus contributing to the cultural undertakings in China.

Organizers from IWR and CARS were even more concerned than IAHR organizers about the success of the conference. Despite recent progress, the discipline of Religious Studies is not yet secure and totally beyond suspicion in the PRC. This international conference played an important legitimization function for local organizers and scholars. As the title they gave to the conference indicates, they wanted to stress its "international" and "academic" nature Foreign scholars were aware of these factors and tried to avoid making any impolitic remarks, although there were in fact

quite frank discussions (especially outside of formal sessions) about the religious situation in China, including problems of researching religion in China.

Formal participants in the conference included 26 foreign scholars and 18 local scholars. The foreign scholars were from Europe and U.K. (11), North America (8), Japan and Korea (6), and Israel (1). Local scholars were mostly from IWR and other units of the Academy of Social Sciences, yet a few were present from the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences (2) and Nanjing Union Theological Seminary (2). Many participants, including local scholars, were not experts in native Chinese religions, a fact which explains the conference's two themes: "Foreign Religions and Chinese Culture" and "Religion and Modernization."

As this was a regional conference of the IAHR and the number of participants was limited, sessions were conducive to lively discussions between participants. Each day began with two plenary sessions, after which participants divided into two groups for several more sessions connected with the two themes. All participants, including local scholars, lived together in Beijing's Exhibition Centre Hotel and had all their meals together, which provided excellent opportunities for discussions outside of formal sessions. There was one day during the conference when foreign scholars were invited to visit the Great Wall, Beijing's Lama Temple (Yong He Gong), and the Beijing Master Kong Temple (Kongzi Miao). Assistance was also provided in arranging other travel to religious monuments in China prior to and following the week of the conference.

Academic Content

One of the most fascinating aspects of the conference was the enthusiasm with which the local scholars addressed methodological issues. For them, the names (and the seminal ideas connected to them) of Weber, Tillich, Bultmann, Berger, and Wittgenstein, to give a few examples, are relatively new. A whole world has opened in recent years for their exploration. If one had to identify a single figure who is now greatly influencing Chinese social scientists, it would be Weber rather than Marx. In Taiwan, the decade of the 1980's was the time when "Weber was hot" (Wei Bo *re*); in the PRC, this same trend is now underway. Although foreign scholars may have felt that local scholars still had a long way to go methodologically, the latter approached certain issues with marked insight. One reason for this is that these scholars have had a deeply existential interest in certain issues, such as that of "religion and modernization." They have been strongly motivated to seek answers to key

questions raised by themselves and foreign scholars: Why has religion *not* disappeared with modernization? Does religion stand in a dialectical relation to modernization, as argued in a paper by Hubert Seiwert (University of Hannover), stimulated by modern problems to grow in certain ways while at the same time always subject to the forces of secularization? Or, quoting the title of a paper by Joachim Matthes (University of Erlangen-Nürnberg): “Is Secularization a Global Process”? Why is religion, even in the PRC’s “socialist society,” an enduring source of moral values, as secular values increasingly fail to serve society’s moral needs (as considered by Luo Weihong, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, and Zhuo Xiping, IWR, in their papers)?

As for questions which produced the most controversy and debate among participants, there was, first, disagreement over the “religious” status of the Confucian tradition. This was not simply disagreement between foreign and local scholars; several local scholars, mostly younger ones, were the most outspoken proponents of defining “religion” in a way that would include Confucianism. Secondly, there was much fruitful discussion both on the suitability of Western concepts (“religion,” “secularization,” “Protestant ethic,” etc.) as well as of indigenous categories (e.g., San Jiao) for understanding Chinese religions, in response, for example to papers on this topic by Jordan Paper (York University, Canada) and Michael Pye (Lancaster University). Thirdly, there were several heated discussions about why religion, and especially Christianity, has experienced such growth in the PRC in recent years, with a paper by Alan Hunter (University of Leeds) presenting a long list of sociological explanations for recent Chinese “conversions” to Protestant groups.

Conference participants also presented the results of a rich variety of historical research. In addition to conducting an impromptu post-conference tour of the newly renovated White Cloud Taoist Temple (Baiyun Guan), Kristofer Schipper (College de France) gave a well-received presentation on the liturgical structures of ancient Beijing. Other topics included sinification of Pure Land Buddhism (Allen Andrews, University of Vermont), Taoism during the 1911 revolution period (Chen Yao-ting, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences), Quanchen Taoism (Wang Ka, IWR), Manichaeism in China (Luther Martin, University of Vermont), Hsi Wang Mu (Masako Mori, Keio University), the early encounter of Neo-Confucians and Christians (Sung-hae Kim, Sogong University), and so forth.

Overall Experience

On the basis of personal observations and a certain amount of informal "interviews" of participants, both local and foreign, I believe all participants were pleased with their overall experience of the conference; it was planned and operated extremely well, materials were available when needed, sessions began and ended on time, contacts with other participants were well facilitated, etc. The IAHR gets much of the credit for this, but more of it goes to the diligent staff of the Chinese hosts. Another reason was the enthusiasm and hospitality of the local scholars, whose thirst for new ways of understanding religion was already mentioned. One shortcoming of the conference, in fact, was that we did not hear the views of certain Chinese scholars more often during formal sessions. Although oral interpreters were available, the heat of discussion often precluded their—or our—full participation. As this was my first IAHR meeting, I must add, in addition, that IAHR members are themselves an extremely congenial and stimulating group of scholars. With these two enthusiastic groups together, there existed an environment very conducive to the exchange of ideas and information, the pursuit of new friendships, and the discussion of future work.

Finally, the results of the conference will be shared, as there are plans to publish the conference proceedings in Chinese and English. The Institute of World Religions will publish Chinese papers and Chinese abstracts of English papers in its journal, *Study of World Religions*. The IAHR plans to publish English papers in a volume of conference proceedings within a couple of years.

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THE STUDY OF RELIGION IN THE SOVIET UNION

Survey article

M.M. SHAKHNOVICH

For the last seventy years, the study of religion in the USSR has gradually taken shape as the whole complex of the branches of science treating religious beliefs and worship.

Studies attempting to apply the dialectical and materialist method prevail among studies devoted to these problems.

A considerable amount of valuable studies has been published in the USSR in the fields of philosophy, sociology and psychology of religion, as well as in the field of the history of religions. Experts in religion are employed at the Studies of Religion Institute of the Academy of Social Science, at the Museum of the History of Religion, at the History Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences, at N.N. Miklukho-Maklai Ethnography Institute, at the Philosophy and Oriental Studies institutes of the USSR Academy of Sciences, at Moscow and Leningrad/St. Petersburg universities, as well as in other research establishments. They attempt to grasp the general history of religion as an integral and consistent process, despite its enormous variety and contradictory nature, of the spiritual life of mankind as being determined in the long run by social and economic forces. This approach assumes the necessity to study each religion—its origins, development, and disappearance—on the basis of the specific, historical conditions which led to the rise of a religion and simultaneously with the study of the society in which that religion operated.

The report by academician N.M. Nikolsky "Religion as a Subject for Scientific Studies" presented at the ceremonial meeting at Belorussian State University in Minsk on the 30th of October 1922 laid the foundation for the studies of religion in the USSR.¹ N.M. Nikolsky is one of the founders of the Soviet School of the study of religion, a prominent expert in various fields of the study of religion: in primitive beliefs, agricultural cults of the Ancient East, Judaism, early Christianity, and Russian Orthodoxy.

In his report, he described the study of religion as a new, young branch of knowledge possessing a great future and to be used as an instrument

in solving the most profound problems of the history of spiritual culture. Nikolai Mikhailovich Nikolsky argued that the situation and atmosphere free from attendant presumptions which are necessary for any other branch of science, are necessary for the continuous and correct growth of the study of religion as well. The history of religions student should possess not only formal but also the actual right to proceed with his studies absolutely freely, without any exaggerated caution or reservations, just as chemists, physicists, mathematicians, linguists, and ethnologists do.²

Unfortunately, one could not always fulfil these conditions. Vulgar sociological approaches which reigned in the social sciences made a great impact on the study of religion in the twenties, especially in the *Origins of Religion* by A.T. Lukachevsky, in the *Oriental Ideologies* by M.A. Reisner, and so on.

Our criticism directed at the vulgar sociological approaches does not imply that we should completely deny the achievements of the Soviet philosophers and historians of the twenties and the thirties.

In his book *Introduction to the Theoretical Study of Religion* (first published in 1973, second edition—in 1985), D.M. Ugrinovich described the results of the studies of the philosophical problems of religion (of the gnoseological analysis of religious consciousness, gnoseological roots of religion) carried out by Soviet scholars and the results of the sociological analysis of religion (the place religion occupies in society, its structures, its social function, and the role it plays in society, the relationship between the scientific and technological revolution and religion, the sociological analysis of religious feelings, religious groups and organizations, processes of secularization, etc).³

D.M. Ugrinovich defined the range of problems explored by the Soviet scholars in religious psychology: religious belief as a sociological and psychological phenomenon, characteristic features of religious feelings, social and psychological traits of a religious personality, the psychological impact of religious worship, and so on. Works by V.P. Bukin, A.I. Klibanov, M.G. Pismannik, M.A. Popova, K.K. Platonov, and V.K. Tancher are prominent in the field of the psychology of religion. Works by A.A. Portnov, an eminent psychiatrist, and the *Psychoses and Religion* (Leningrad, Medgiz publishers, 1967) by such an expert in the study of religion as M.I. Shakhnovich treat the problems related to psychoses and religion.

In 1965, for the first time in Soviet study of religion, M.I. Shakhnovich raised the problem of nonconfessional forms of religion in his book *A Scientific View of Contemporary Mysticism*.

Soviet scholars demonstrated in their works that religion in society

depends on the interests and goals of certain social groups and classes and is connected with their political and ideological struggles. However, religion possesses some independence in its development because the economic basis does not directly determine its changes. On the contrary, religion itself can exercise some influence on the economic basis.

Interest in studies of religious beliefs in connection with the development of certain social conditions which gave birth to those beliefs is also reflected in the first Soviet scientific work on the study of religion: *Religion and Society* (Leningrad 1926), which had the subtitle *Collection of Articles on the Exploration of the Social Foundations of Religious Phenomena in the Ancient World*. It contains articles by the most prominent scholars and its importance persists up to the present day: V.V. Struve, "Social Problems in the Funeral Cult of Ancient Egypt" and "Dialogue of the Master and the Slave on the Meaning of Life According to the New Babylonian (Literary) Monument"; I.G. Frank-Kamenetsky, "The Prophet Jeremiah and the Struggle of Parties in Judea"; B.L. Bogaevsky, "Ritual Gesture and Ancient World Society"; B.L. Kazansky, "Everyday Basis of Sacrifice in Ancient Greece"; I.M. Trotsky (Trontsov), "The Religion of Greek Shepherds"; A.V. Boldyrev, "Religion of Seafarers in Ancient Greece"; and J.A. Borovsky, "Overcoming the Religious Element in the Laws of Ancient Greece".

Soviet scholars have contributed to the study of religion in the whole world by their works on the origins of religion and on the early forms of religion. Works by L.J. Shternberg (*Ethnographical Views of Primitive Religion*), V.G. Bogoraz-Tan (*The Chukchi Religion*), G.P. Frantsov (*Ancient Egyptian Religion*), and D.K. Zelenin (*Slavonic Beliefs*) are among the best known.

Academician G.P. Frantsov believed that religious manifestations such as fetishism, magic, animism, and totemism in those forms studied by ethnographers can be considered to be products of a long historical process. Therefore, none of these manifestations can be considered to be the original form of religion. However, in each of these manifestations one can see the primordial contents which can help the scholars to determine the nature of original religious beliefs. Frantsov maintained that one should look for the genesis of notions about the supernatural in the processes of the endowment of objects and natural phenomena with supersensible qualities. He presented a comprehensive analysis of the problem of the "sensible-supersensible" objects of worship in the ethnographic and archaeological evidence. He also revealed the nature of making fetishes of different objects and natural phenomena using, in particular, materials related to Ancient Egypt⁴ because he was an expert in the history of its spiritual culture.

The eminent Soviet ethnographer, S.A. Tokarev, in his work *Early Religious Forms and Their Development* (Moscow 1964), summarized the results of studies on totemism, shamanism, ancestor worship, etc. and proposed an original solution for numerous complex problems in primitive religion. He also created his own theory of systems for early forms of worship. He believed that fetishism, magic, and animism were religious elements and that totemism, malignant magic, medical magic (sorcery), sexual magic, and funeral cults are the early forms of religion. In his opinion, more mature religious forms also develop within the communal and tribal system. They reflect the development of more complex forms of social life and material production: early tribal cults (initiation), hunting and fishing cults, family and tribal cults of sacred objects and patrons, patriarchal and family cults, secret society cults, tribal ancestor worship, shamanism, personal patron spirits cults, chieftain cults, cults of tribal gods, and agricultural cults. Considerable interest was also aroused by a paper written by S.A. Tokarev on the inner nature and origins of magic.⁵

Soviet ethnographers, archaeologists, philosophers,⁶ and historians have published more than 800 studies on early forms of religion. A lot of hitherto unknown materials on the religious beliefs and rites of numerous peoples of the USSR have been collected and analyzed.⁷ Soviet experts in religion have especially excelled in their studies of shamanism.⁸

All these problems have been treated in numerous works by A.F. Anisimov who strove to solve them using materials on Evenk beliefs, especially in his work *A Historical and Genetic View of the Evenk Religion and the Problem of the Origins of Primitive Religions* (Moscow and Leningrad 1958).

Books treating problems of primitive ways of thinking and of primitive consciousness have also acquired a considerable renown. These works include: *Historical Roots of Fairy-Tales* by V.J. Propp (Leningrad 1946); *Tribal Systems and Primitive Mythology* by A.M. Zolotarjov (Moscow 1904); *Cosmological Notions of the Peoples of the North* by A.F. Anisimov (Moscow-Leningrad 1959); *Myth Poetics* (Moscow 1976) and *Palaeoasian Mythological Epic: The Raven Cycle* (Moscow 1979) by E.M. Meletinsky; *The World and Fairy-Tales of Africa* by G.S. Kotljar (Moscow 1975); *Myth* by M.I. Steblin-Kamensky (Leningrad 1970); and *The Logics of Myth* by J.E. Golosovker (Moscow 1987). A number of works treat the process of change in myths in primitive society during the period of ancient civilisations: *Myths of Ancient Egypt* by M.E. Matje (Moscow 1956); *Myths of Antiquity in Their Historical Development* by A.F. Losev (Moscow 1957); and *Archaic Myths of East and West* by I.M. Djakonov (Moscow 1990). The problem of the rela-

tionship of primordial philosophy and religion also aroused considerable interest. M.I. Shakhnovich published two books on this subject: *Primitive Mythology and Philosophy* (Moscow-Leningrad 1971) and *Origins of Philosophy and Atheism* (Moscow-Leningrad 1973). The traditional approach to the studies of mythological semantics on the basis of the principles of structural linguistics and semiotics goes back to the twenties and the thirties.⁹

The publication of the richly illustrated fundamental encyclopaedia in two volumes entitled *Myths of the Peoples of the World* marked a great event in the scientific and cultural life of this country (Moscow 1980, second edition 1989). This work, which is the result of the collaboration of numerous prominent experts and was edited by S.A. Tokarev, contains articles about the mythologies of all the peoples of the world. It includes information about mythological characters and subjects, about different approaches to the studies of myths as well as summarizing articles about the underlying mythological motifs and images, and about myth types. Each article is followed by a bibliography and concise information about the elaboration of specific images in art. This publication is also of great interest because it reflects the whole spectrum of approaches which exist in Soviet studies of religion as several articles often simultaneously contain different opinions on the same problem.

The USSR Academy of Sciences, Ethnography Institute, in the fifties and sixties published twelve volumes entitled *Peoples of the World. Ethnographical Sketches*, edited by S.P. Tolstov. This work contains in a generalized form an enormous amount of ethnographical evidence. It includes, in particular, materials about the religions of African peoples (edited by D.A. Olderogge and I.I. Potekhin, 1954), of the peoples of Australia and Oceania (edited by S.A. Tokarev and S.P. Tolstov, 1956), of American peoples (edited by A.V. Efimov and S.A. Tokarev, Part 1 and Part 2, 1959), of Siberian peoples (edited by M.G. Levin and L.P. Potapov, 1956), of the peoples of the European part of the USSR (edited by V.A. Aleksandrov and V.N. Belitser, 1964), of the peoples of Europe outside the USSR (edited by S.A. Tokarev and N.N. Cheboksarov, Part 1 and Part 2, 1964-1965), of the peoples of the Caucasus (edited by M.O. Kosven, Part 1 and Part 2, 1960-1962), of Eastern Asian peoples (edited by N.N. Cheboksarov), of Front Asian peoples (edited by N.A. Kislyakov and A.I. Pershits, 1957), of Middle Asian peoples and the peoples of Kazakhstan (edited by S.P. Tolstov, Part 1 and Part 2, 1962-1963), of the peoples of South-Eastern Asia (edited by A.A. Guber, 1966), and of South Asian peoples (edited by N.P. Guseva, 1963).

In 1976, S.A. Tokarev published a special work devoted to the analysis of religious beliefs and rites of the peoples inhabiting practically every area

of the world. It was republished several times and translated into numerous foreign languages (*Religion in the History of the Peoples of the World*, 1976). This book treats primitive national religions (religions of ancient civilizations included) as well as the world religions.

Numerous groups of experts in ethnography, history, art criticism, and literary criticism have produced studies on the religions of China,¹⁰ Japan,¹¹ Australia and Oceania,¹² as well as traditional religions of different countries of Europe,¹³ Latin America,¹⁴ and Africa.¹⁵

Two volumes of *Religious Beliefs of the Peoples of the USSR*, written by a large group of Soviet ethnographers, were released in Moscow in 1931 (edited by V.K. Nikolsky). They laid the foundation for the profound study of traditional beliefs and worship in every area of this country, and their importance persists till this day thanks to the comprehensive nature of the subjects treated and to the depth of the ethnographical evidence analyzed. This publication includes articles on the religions of the peoples of the Caucasus, of the Volga region, of the Urals, of Siberian peoples, of the peoples of Middle Asia, of the European part of Russia, etc. These studies are carried on now by ethnographers in every republic as well as by experts in Moscow and Leningrad (the latter being the site of the State Museum of Ethnography of the Peoples of the USSR. Its staff carries out an enormous collecting work.)¹⁶

Russian culture has deep-lying traditions in the studies of Slavonic mythology and folklore. The creation of a national school in Slavonic antiquities is associated with such names as A.N. Afanasjev, A.A. Potebnja, and E.V. Anichkov. Their studies were carried on by D.K. Zelenin (*East-Slavonic Ethnography*, Moscow 1991—first published in German in Berlin in 1927 under the title *Russische [Ostslavische] Volkskunde*); by V.J. Propp (*Russian Agricultural Festivals*, Leningrad 1963); by S.A. Tokarev (*Religious Beliefs of East-Slavonic Peoples in the 19th Century and Early 20th Century*, Moscow-Leningrad 1957); by B.A. Rybakov (*Paganism of the Ancient Russ*, Moscow 1967 and *Paganism of the Ancient Slavs*, Moscow 1981); and by M.I. Shakhnovich (*Rational and Prejudicial Omens*, Leningrad 1984). Quite recently, the methods of structural anthropology and structural linguistics have become widespread and used in Slavonic ethnological studies (V.V. Ivanov, V.N. Toporov, *Slavonic Modelling of Linguistic Semiotic Systems: Early Period*, Moscow 1965 and *Studies in Slavonic Antiquities*, Moscow 1974; B.A. Uspensky, *A Historical and Cultural View of St. Nicolas Worship in Russia. Features of Perception and Transformation of the Original Image* [Papers on Sign Systems, Volume 10] Tartu 1978; *Slavonic and Balkan Folklore. Reconstruction of Ancient Slavonic Spiritual Culture*, Moscow 1983.)

Profound studies of the Ancient Near East began in Russia late in the

19th century. B.A. Turajev¹⁷ and his pupils, A.I. Tjumenev, V.V. Struve, N.D. Flittner, N.M. Nikolsky, I.G. Frank-Kamenetsky, and V.K. Shilejko¹⁸ made great contributions to the studies of Ancient Near Eastern cultures. The traditions of these scholars were carried on later in such works as *The Overturn by Amen-Hotep the 4th* (Moscow 1967, volumes 1, 2) by J.A. Perepjolkin; *Ancient Egyptian Religion* (Moscow 1976) by M.A. Korostovtsev; *The Temple in Ancient Egypt* (Moscow 1989) by H.A. Kink; *Spiritual Culture of Babylonia* (Moscow 1983) by I.S. Klochkov; *Human Person in the Culture of Ancient Middle East* (Moscow 1986) by I.P. Vainberg; and *People of the City of Ur* (Moscow 1986) by I.M. Djakonov.

Multi-volume publications on the history of the Ancient World containing articles on religious practices and mythology¹⁹, as well as gorgeous albums with scientific notes on the art of the Ancient Near East²⁰ are also of a great scientific value.

Such prominent Russian historians of the late 19th century and the early 20th century as N.I. Novosadsky, J.A. Kulakovskiy, F.F. Zelinsky, V.V. Latyshev, E.G. Kagarov, B.P. Bogajevsky devoted their efforts to the study of the antique religious world outlook. Their works served as textbooks for entire generations of Soviet students of antiquity. It is in the field of mythology that the most interesting books were published. These works include *Greek Mythology* (Moscow-Leningrad 1937) by M.S. Altman; *Antique Mythology* (Moscow-Leningrad 1939) by S.I. Radtsyg; *Essays on Antique Symbols and Myths* (Moscow 1930) by A.F. Losev, etc.

The work by V.I. Ivanov, *Dionysus and Pre-Dionysism* was written in keeping with the traditions of the pre-revolutionary literature (Baku 1923). Textbooks and monographs of a general nature also contain articles on antique religion.²¹ Books on the culture of the peoples who used to inhabit the northern shores of the Black Sea²² as well as the works by E.M. Shtajerman on Ancient Rome also made a great contribution to the studies of antique religion.²³

Soviet experts in Biblical matters used to assume that the history of Biblical texts is “one of the aspects of ancient Jewish history in which, as in the history of any nation, ideological development was determined by the process of the development of the real life of the nation ...”²⁴ Such scholars as N.M. Nikolsky, A.B. Ranovich, I.G. Frank-Kemenetsky, M.I. Shakhnovich, I.D. Amusin, I.A. Kryvelev, M.I. Rizhsky, and others were active in this field.²⁵

Studies on the religions of India are based on the works of experts such as I.L. Minaev, O.O. Rosenberg, S.F. Oldenburg, and F.I. Shcherbat-skoy. Such books as *The Religions of Ancient India* (Moscow 1959) by G.F. Iljin; *Jainism* (Moscow 1968) and *Hinduism. Development. History. Worship*

Practices (Moscow 1977) by N.R. Guseva; *Ancient Indian Epics. Genesis and Typology* (Moscow 1974) by N.P. Zhukovskaja; *Buddhism* (Moscow 1968) and *Lamaism* (Moscow 1973) by A.N. Kochetov; and *The Civilization of Ancient India. Philosophy, Science, Religion* (Moscow 1980) by G.M. Bongard-Levin were released during the Soviet period. The publication of the religious literary monuments of Ancient India is still going on. The *Guide to Determination of North Buddhist Pieces of Iconography* written by a group of Leningrad/St. Petersburg staff members at the Museum of History of Religion in 1987 aroused considerable interest among scholars.

Soviet scholars have made great contributions to the study of Islam. It is sufficient to mention the works of V.V. Barthold, E.E. Bertels,²⁶ I.J. Krachkovsky (who completely translated the Koran into Russian and wrote comprehensive academic notes to it), and V.A. Gordievsky. Important monographs were written by E.A. Beljaev, L.I. Klimovich, N.A. Smirnov, I.S. Braginsky, I.A. Petrushevsky, A.I. Ionova, M.V. Vagrakov, S.M. Gadzhier, M.B. Piotrovsky, and others. In their works, G.P. Snesarev, V.M. Basilov and others summarized the results of many years of research work related to pre-Muslim beliefs and cults which was carried out on the sites.

Experts in Islam addressed the problem of this religion's origins, attempted to cast some light on the social basis of early Islamic ideology, analyzed separate branches of Islam, the part Muslim organizations and movements used to play and still play in political life, as well as the contemporary place of Islam in various Soviet republics.²⁷

All these works laid the foundation which permitted the appearance of summarizing research works and books of reference on pre-Christian and world religions. In 1975-1976, I.A. Kryvelev published the two volumes of his *History of Religion* (its second revised edition was released in 1988) which treats predominantly the history of the world religions. This work consistently describes the origins and development of Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism. This description follows the sections treating the origins of religion on the whole as well as some problems related to the history of the early religions of the Mediterranean which can help to better understand the historical roots of the cults and tenets of the world religions.

Wide circles of experts²⁸ who perpetuated the traditions of the mythological and comparative historical approach to the studies of Christianity chose as subjects for their research the genesis of Christian literature, the origins and evolution of Christian worship, the development of the Church, as well as other problems related to early Christian history. They analyzed social and economic prerequisites for Christianity

during Antiquity and the social part it played, identified periods in its history, and studied early heresies.

Studies of sources, the publication of sources, and the search for dating the New Testament monuments have assumed a prominent position among the interests of this group of historians of religion.

The following books treating these problems are of a special interest: *The Origins of Christian Literature* (Moscow-Leningrad 1946) and *Rome and Early Christianity* (Moscow 1954) by R.J. Vipper; *On Early Christianity* (Moscow 1959) by A.B. Ranovich; *Comparison of the Gospels* (Moscow 1967) and *Origins of Christianity* (Moscow 1960) by J.A. Lentsman; *Historical Evidence About Jesus Christ* (Moscow 1969) by I.A. Kryvelev; and *Secret Writings of the First Christians* (Moscow 1969) and *Early Christianity: Some Historical Facts* (Moscow 1987) by I.S. Svenitskaya.

Soviet scholars have paid great attention to the study of Roman Catholicism and papacy. The book by S.G. Lozinsky *Papacy History* (Moscow 1934, 1961, 1986) used to be the most fundamental work on the history of Roman Catholicism. It consistently treats the history of papacy up to the end of the 18th century. His efforts were picked up among others by M.M. Sheinman (*Contemporary Clericalism*, Moscow 1964). The best-known books on the history and the present state of Western Christianity were written by M.B. Andreev, V.I. Garadzha, M.P. Mchedlov, N.A. Kovalsky, L.I. Velikovich, V.J. Njunka, J.V. Minkjavichjus, R.T. Rashkova, N.V. Revunenkova, and others. The problem of the attitude of the papacy towards Russia in the 9th and 15th centuries is explored in the book *Papacy and Russia* (Leningrad 1961) by B.J. Ramm. I.R. Grigulevich has published numerous important works on the history of the Inquisition, on contemporary Vatican activities, as well as some papers analyzing the position and role of the Catholic Church in Latin America.²⁹

The problems of reformational movements and the origins of Protestant churches have not been left unnoticed by Soviet historians.³⁰

Numerous Soviet historians have also explored the past of the Russian Orthodox Church. *The Russian Church History* by N.M. Nikolsky (1st edition in 1930, 3rd edition in 1983) and the essays *The Church in Russian History From the 9th Century Till 1917* (Moscow 1967) written by the members of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Institute of History staff are among the most outstanding works of the kind. Works by B.D. Grekov, M.N. Tikhomirov, B.A. Rybakov, A.M. Samsonov, B.P. Kandidov, I.U. Budovnits, N.A. Kazakova, A.M. Sakharov, G.F. Grekolov, J.N. Shchapov, N.S. Gordienko, M.P. Novikov and others treat various aspects of the history of Russian Orthodoxy. Many interesting articles

and books were published in 1988-1989 on the occasion of the 1000th anniversary of the christening of Russia.³¹

A.I. Klibanov has made a great contribution to the exploration of religious and social movements in Russia. He published a series of fundamental works, which can be actually seen as one enormous work in five volumes, on the history of religious sectarianism and Russian popular freethinking in the 14th-20th centuries: *The Reformation Movement in Russia From the 14th Century Till the First Half of the 16th Century* (Moscow 1960), *A History of Religious Sectarianism in Russia* (Moscow 1965), *Religious Sectarianism and the Present Day* (Moscow 1970), *Popular Social Utopia in Russia. Feudalism Period* (Moscow 1977), and *Popular Social Utopia in Russia. The 19th Century* (Moscow 1978). For this series Klibanov was awarded the USSR State Prize in 1980.

L.I. Emeljakh published a few books devoted to the problem of peasant movements and the Church in Russia early in the 20th century (*Anticlerical Peasant Movements During the First Russian Revolution*, Moscow-Leningrad 1965; *Peasants and the Church on the Eve of the October-Revolution*, Leningrad 1976, and others).

There are academic periodicals in the Soviet Union which contain articles and reports related to study of religion. Examples are such periodicals of the USSR Academy of Sciences as *Philosophy Problems*, *Soviet Ethnography*, *Bulletin of Ancient History*, etc. The USSR Academy of Sciences, Institute of Scientific Information in the Field of Social Studies publishes a special bibliographical index (issued 6 times a year) entitled *New Soviet and Foreign Literature. Problems of Atheism and Religion*.

Various research institutions have their own regular periodicals which treat subjects related to the study of religion. *Problems of Scientific Atheism* is the best known periodical of this kind (1966-1989, Nos 1-39). It used to be published by the Institute of Scientific Atheism of the CPSU Central Committee Academy of Social Science. This periodical used to contain among others articles on the history of religion and the church both in the USSR and abroad and on the sociological and psychological aspects of religion. Such periodicals as the *Problems of Religion and Atheism History* (1950-1964, Nos 1-12) published by the USSR Academy of Sciences and the *Year Book* (1957-1963, Nos 1-8) published by the Museum of the History of Religion in Leningrad/St. Petersburg are basic works by groups of authors which contain great amounts of information and elaborate research papers on various aspects of theoretical and applied study of religion.

At the moment, the Museum of the History of Religion publishes 3-4 times a year collections of academic studies devoted to particular subjects,

such as *Topical Problems in the Study of Religion and Atheism* (1976), *Art and Religion* (1979), *Islam and the Present Day* (1985), *Orthodoxy in Ancient Russia* (1989), *Problems in the Study and Criticism of Oriental Religions* (1979), *Primitive Society and Religion in the Light of Contemporary Evidence* (1984), *Russian Orthodoxy and Atheism in Russian History* (1988), a series of publications treating the problems of social and philosophical as well as social and psychological analyses of religion and religious morals.

Collections of works on specific subjects put out by the Peter the Great Anthropology and Ethnography Museum in Leningrad, which were published already before 1917 (43 volumes have been issued since then), are also of substantial interest. They contain materials on the cultures and religions of the peoples of the whole world. The "Nauka" publishers and their Oriental Literature Editing Department annually publish the *Religions of the World. History and the Present Day* collection.

Studies of religion in the Soviet Union have moved a long way in overcoming vulgar sociological and other interpretations. On the basis of the best traditions of progressive Russian philosophical thought and advanced historical science, Soviet scholars have achieved a lot in their exploration of the complex problems of such an important area of spiritual culture as religion. The discussion about the study of religion in the magazine *Soviet Ethnography*,³² which involved many philosophers, historians, and ethnographers, has helped to set further goals for the study of religion.

Scientific exploration of the problems related to the studies of religion in the light of the new way of thinking, which is being developed in this country during the present period of restructuring every aspect of our spiritual life, necessitates a critical revision of the old-fashioned concepts and a further development of the valuable and advanced heritage accumulated by Soviet scholars.

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¹ The report was published in Minsk in 1923 as a separate booklet and was republished in the book: N.M. Nikolsky *Izbrannye proizvedeniya po istorii religii* ("Selected works on the History of Religion"), Moskva 1974, p. 16-37.

² Ibid., p. 35.

³ See: N.P. Andrianov, *Evoljutsiya religionznogo soznaniya* ("The Evolution of Religious Consciousness"), Leningrad 1974; M.G. Pismanik, *Lichnost i religiya* ("Personality and Religion"), Moskva 1976; the same author, *Individualnaya religionnost i ejo preodolenie* ("Individual Religiousness and How to Get the Better of It"), Moskva 1984; A.F. Okulov, *Sotsialnyj progress i religiya* ("Social Progress and Religion"), Moskva 1982; O.S. Onishchenko, *Sotsialnyj progress, religiya, ateizm*

(“Social Progress, Religion, Atheism”), Kiev 1977; V.D. Kobetsky, *Sotsiologicheskoe izuchenie religioznosti i ateizma* (“Sociological Study of Religiousness and Atheism”), Leningrad 1978; I.N. Jablokov, *Sotsiologiya religii* (“Religion and Sociology”), Moskva 1979; S.A. Kuchinsky, *Chelovek moralnyj* (“The Moral Person”), Moskva 1987.

⁴ See: G.P. Frantsov, *Fetishizm i problema proishozhdeniya religii* (“Fetishism and the Origins of Religion Problem”), Moskva 1940 and *U istokov religii i svobodomysliya* (“At the Sources of Religion and Freethinking”), Moskva 1959.

⁵ See: *Issledovaniya i materialy po voprosam pervobytnyh religionnyh verovanij* (“Research Papers and Materials on the Problem of Primitive Religious Beliefs”), Moskva 1959.

⁶ See: A.D. Suhov, *Filosofskie problemy proishozhdeniya religii* (“Philosophical Problems Related to the Origins of Religion”), Moskva 1970; J.A. Levada, *Sotsialnaya priroda religii* (“Social Nature of Religion”), Moskva 1965; E.V. Kulebackin, *Antropomorfizm i genetika religii* (“Anthropomorphism and the Genesis of Religion”), Vladivostok 1987; D.M. Ugrinovich, *Iskusstvo i religiya* (“Art and Religion”), Moskva 1982; the same author, *Vvedenie v teoreticheskoye religovedeniye* (“Introduction to the Theoretical Study of Religion”), Moskva 1973.

⁷ V.G. Bogoraz-Tan, *Chukchi. Religiya* (“The Chukchi. Religion”), Leningrad 1939; D.K. Zelenin, *Kult ongonov v Sibiri. Perezhitki totemizma v ideologii sibirskih narodov* (“The Ongon Cult in Siberia. Vestiges of Totemism in the Ideology of Siberian Peoples”), Moskva 1936; A.S. Sidorov, *Znaharstvo, koldovstvo i porcha u naroda Komi* (“Sorcery, Witchcraft, and the Evil Eye of the Komi”), Leningrad 1928; N.M. Matorin, *Religiya u narodov Volzhsko-Kamskogo kraja* (“Religion of the Peoples Living by the Volga and Kama Rivers”), Moskva 1929; and N.F. Anisimov was author to series of works on the Evenk religion (1958-1968).

⁸ The following books have been published during the last decade: G.M. Mikhailov, *Iz istorii buryatskogo shamanizma* (“From the History of Burjat Shamanism”), Novosibirsk 1980; N.A. Alekseev, *Shamanizm tjurksko-szychnyh narodov Sibiri* (“Shamanism of the Turkic-Speaking Peoples of Siberia”), Novosibirsk 1984; E.S. Novik, *Obryad i folklor v sibirskom shamanizme* (“Rites and Folklore in Siberian Shamanism”), Moskva 1984.

⁹ See: O.M. Fraidenberg, *Mif i literatura drevnosti* (“Myth and Literature of the Ancient World”), Moskva 1978 and *Tipologicheskie issledovaniya po folklyoru: Sbornik statej pamyati V.J. Proppa* (“Typological Studies of Folklore: Collection of Articles in Memory of V.J. Propp”), Moskva 1975, etc.

¹⁰ L.S. Vasilyev, *Kulty, religii i traditsii v Kitae* (“Cults, Religions, and Traditions in China”), Moskva 1970; B.L. Riftin, *Mifologiya i razvitiye povestvovatelnoj prozy v drevnem Kitae/Literatura drevnego Kitaya* (“Mythology and Narrative Prose Development in Ancient China/Ancient Chinese Literature”), Moskva 1969; the same author, *Ot mifa k romanu* (“From Myth to Novel”), Moskva 1979; L.P. Sychiov and V.L. Sychiov, *Kitajskij kostym. Simvolika. Iстoriya* (“Chinese Garments. Symbols and History”), Moskva 1975; L.E. Pomerantseva, *Pozdnye daosy o prirode, obshchestve i iskusstve* (“Late Daoists on Nature, Society, and Art”), Moskva 1979; *Konfutsianstvo v Kitae* (“Confucianism in China”), Moskva 1982; *Dao i daosizm v Kitae* (“The Dao and Daoism in China”), Moskva 1982.

¹¹ S.A. Arutjunov and G.E. Svetlov, *Starye i novye bogi Japonii* (“Old and New Gods of Japan”), Moskva 1968; N.I. Konrad, *Ocherk istorii kul'tury srednevekovoj Japonii VII-XVI vekov* (“Essay on the Cultural History of Medieval Japan of the 7th-16th centuries”), Moskva 1980; E.M. Pinus, *Drevnie mify japonskogo*

naroda Kitae. Japoniya. Istorya i filologiya (“Ancient Myths of the Japanese/China. Japan. History and Philology”), Moskva 1961; A.N. Ignatovich, *Buddizm v Japonii. Ocherk rannej istorii* (“Buddhism in Japan. An Essay on Early History”), Moskva 1987; A.N. Meshcheryakov, *Drevnyaya Japoniya. Buddizm i sintoizm. Problemy sinkretizma* (“Ancient Japan. Buddhism and Shintoism. Problems of Syncretism”), Moskva 1987.

¹² See: *Okeanijskij etnograficheskij sbornik* (“Oceanic Ethnographical Collection”), Moskva 1957; *Skazi i mify Okeanii* (“Fairy-Tales and Myths of Oceania”), Moskva 1970; M.S. Butinova, *Misionerstvo i kolonializm v Okeanii* (“Missionaries and Colonies in Oceania”), Leningrad 1975; V.P. Kabo, *Pervobytnaya dozemledelcheskaya obshchchina* (“Primitive pre-Agricultural Community”), Moskva 1986.

¹³ For example: A series of collections *Kalendarnye obychai i obryady v stranah zarubezhnoj Evropy XIX nachalo XX vekov* (“Calendar Customs and Rites in Foreign European Countries in the 19th Century and Early 20th Century”), (The USSR Academy of Sciences, N.N. Mikklukho-Maklai Ethnography Institute); M.M. Bakhtin, *Tvorchestvo Fransa Rable i narodnaya kultura srednevekovya i Renessansa* (“François Rabelais’ Creative Work and Popular Culture of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance”), Moskva 1965; A.J. Gurevich, *Edda i saga* (“Edda and Saga”), Moskva 1979; E.M. Meletinsky, *Edda i rannie formy eposa* (“Edda and the Early Epic Forms”), Moskva 1968; *Baltoslavyanskij sbornik* (“Baltic and Slavonic collection”), Moskva 1972.

¹⁴ R.V. Kinzhalov, *Kultura drevnih maya* (“Ancient Maya Culture”); J.V. Knorozov, *Ieroglificheskie rukopisi maya* (“The Maya Hieroglyphic Manuscripts”), Leningrad 1975; J.A. Berjozkin, *Mochika. Tsivilizatsiya indeytsev severnogo poberezhya Peru v I-VII vekah* (“The Mochica. Civilization of Northern Peruvian Coast Indians in the 1st-7th Centuries”), Leningrad 1983.

¹⁵ B.I. Sharevskaya, *Starve i novye religii Tropicheskoy i Juzhnoj Afriki* (“Old and New Religions of Tropical and Southern Africa”), Moskva 1964. Problems on African religions are treated in the following works on traditional African art: N.E. Grigorovich, *Traditsionnaya skulptura jorubov* (“Traditional Sculpture of the Yoruba”), Moskva 1977; A.A. Gromyko, *Maski i skulptura tropicheskoy Afriki* (“Masks and Sculptures of Tropical Africa”), Moskva 1984; V.B. Mirimanov, *Iskusstvo Tropicheskoy Afriki. Tipoligiya, sistematika, evoljutsiya* (“Tropical African Art. Typology, Systems, Evolution”), Moskva 1986.

¹⁶ See: E.D. Titov, *Etnografiya. Bibliografiya russikh bibliografij po etnografii narodov SSSR* (1851-1969) (“Ethnography. Bibliography of Russia. Bibliographies on the Ethnography of the Peoples of the USSR” (1851-1969)), Moskva 1970.

¹⁷ B.A. Turajev, *Istorya drevnego Vostoka* (“Ancient Near Eastern History”), Volume 1, St. Petersburg/Petrograd 1911, 1913, 1924, 1935; B.A. Turajev, *Literatura Vostoka* (“Literature of the Near East”), Issue no. 2, Petrograd 1920; B.A. Turajev, *Egipetskaya literatura* (“Egyptian Literature”), Volume 1, 1920.

¹⁸ I.D. Frank-Kamenetsky, *Pamyatniki egipetskoy religii v Fivanskij period* (“Monuments of Egyptian Religion During the Theban Period”), Issues 1-2, Petrograd 1917-1918; V.V. Struve, *Zaupokonyj kult drevnego Egipta* (“Funeral Cult of Ancient Egypt”), Petrograd 1919; I.L. Snegiriov, *Drevnj Vostok. Atlas derevnjej istorii* (“Ancient Near East. Atlas of the Early History”), Leningrad 1937; V.V. Struve, *Istorya Drevnego Vostoka* (“Ancient Near Eastern History”), Moskva 1941, etc.

¹⁹ See: *Istorya Drevnego Vostoka* (“Ancient Near Eastern History”), Part 1: “Mesopotamiya” (“Mesopotamia”), Moskva 1983; Part 2: “Perednyaya Aziya.

Egipt” (“Front Asia. Egypt”), Moskva 1988; *Istoriya Drevnego Mira* (“Ancient World History”), Book 1: “Rannaya drevnost” (“Early Antiquity”), Book 2: “Rastsvet drevnih obshchestv” (“Golden Age of Ancient Societies”), Book 3: “Upadok drevnih obshchestv” (“Decline of Ancient Societies”), Moskva 1983.

²⁰ N.D. Flittner, *Kultura i iskusstvo Dvurechya i sosednih stran* (“Culture and Art of the Two Rivers Region and of the Contiguous Countries”), Moskva-Leningrad 1958; V.K. Afanasyeva, I.M. Djakonov, V.G. Lukonin, M.E. Matje, *Iskusstvo Drevnego Vostoka* (“Ancient Near Eastern Art”) Moskva 1970; *Iskusstvo Drevnego Vostoka* (“Ancient Near Eastern Art”), compiled by S.I. Khodzhash, Moskva 1970; *Drevneegipetskie reliefs i stely v sobranii Gosudarstvennogo muzeya izobrazitelnyh iskusstv imeni A.S. Pushkina (Moskva)* (“Ancient Egyptian Reliefs and Stelae in the A.S. Pushkin Fine Arts Museum Collection (Moscow)”), Leningrad 1982.

²¹ A.B. Ranovich, *Ellinizm i ego istoricheskaya rol* (“Hellenism and its Historical Role”), Moskva-Leningrad 1950; *Istoriya i kultura antichnogo mira* (“History and Culture of the Antique World”), Moskva 1977; A.P. Kazhdan, *Religiya i ateizm v Drevnem Mire* (“Religion and Atheism in the Ancient World”), Moskva 1975; S.J. Lurie, *Jazyk i kultura Mikenskoy Gretsii* (“Language and Culture of Mycenae Greece”), Moskva-Leningrad 1957.

²² I.I. Tolstoj, *Ostrov Belyj i Tavrika na Evksinskom Ponte* (“The Isle of Belyj and Tavrika of the Ancient Black Sea”), Petrograd 1918; *Antichnyje gosudarstva Severnogo Prichernomorya* (“Antique States on the Northern Shores of the Black Sea”), Moskva 1934; M.M. Kobylina, *Izobrazheniya vostochnykh bozhestv v Severnom Prichernomorye v pervye veka novoy ery* (“Depictions of Oriental Deities on the Northern Shores of the Black Sea Made in the First Centuries A.D.”), Moskva 1978.

²³ E.M. Shtaerman, *Moral i religiya ugнетionnyh klassov Rimskoy Imperii* (“Moral and Religion of the Oppressed Classes of the Roman Empire”), Moskva 1961; the same author, *Sotsialnye osnovy religii Drevnego Rima* (“Social Basis of Religion in Ancient Rome”), Moskva 1987.

²⁴ See: I.A. Kryvelev, *Proishozhdenie Biblii* (“Origins of the Bible”), Moskva 1964.

²⁵ N.M. Nikolsky, *Drevnij Izrail* (“Ancient Israel”), Moskva 1922; the same author, *Evreyskie i hristianskie prazdniki* (“Jewish and Christian Festivals”), Moskva 1930; the same author, *Izbrannye proizvedeniya po istorii religii* (“Selected Works on the History of Religion”), Moskva 1974; A.B. Ranovich, *Ocherk istorii drevneevreyskoy religii* (“Essay on Ancient Jewish Religion History”), Moskva 1937; I.G. Frank-Kamenetsky *Proroki-chudotvortsy* (“Prophets-Miracle Workers”), Leningrad 1925; the same author, *Perezhitki animizma v bibleyskoy poezii/Evreyskaya mysl* (“Vestiges of Animism in Biblical Poetry/Jewish Thought”), 1926; the same author, *Voda i ogon v bibleyskoy poezii/Jafeticheskiy sbornik nomer 3* (“Water and Fire in Biblical Poetry/Japhetic Collection No. 3”), 1925; M.I. Shaknovich, *Sotsialnaya sushchnost Talmuda* (“Social Nature of the Talmud”), Moskva 1929; the same author, *Reaktsionnaya sushchnost iudaizma* (“Reactionary Nature of Judaism”), Leningrad 1969; the same author, *Bibliya v sovremennoy borbe idey* (“The Bible in the Contemporary Struggle of Ideas”), Leningrad 1988; I.A. Kryvelev, *Kniga o Biblii* (“A Book about the Bible”), Moskva 1958; the same author, *Kak kritikovali Bibliju v starinu* (“How the Bible Used to Be Criticized in Bygone Days”), 1968; the same author, *Raskopi v “bibleyskih stranah”* (“Excavations in ‘Biblical Lands’”), Moskva 1965; the same author, *Bibliya. Istoriko-kriticheskij analiz* (“The Bible. Critical Analysis. Historical View”), Moskva 1982; I.D. Amusin, *Rukopisi Mert-*

vogo Morya ("The Dead Sea Manuscripts"), Moskva 1961; the same author, *Kumranskaya obshchina* ("Qumran Community"), Moskva 1983; I.Sh. Shifman, *Vethij zavet i ego mir. Vethij zavet kak pamyatnik literatury i obshcherstvennoy mysli Drevney Peredney Azii* ("The Old Testament and Its World. The Old Testament as a Monument of Literature and Social Thought of Ancient Front Asia"), Moskva 1987; M.I. Rizhsky, *Bibleyskie proroki i prorochestva* ("Biblical Prophets and Prophecies"), Moskva 1987; the same author, *Istoriya perevodov Biblii v Rossii* ("History of Biblical Translations in Russia"), 1978; the same author, *Kniga Iova* ("The Book of Job"), 1984; among the books on the post-biblical Judaism, one should point out the work by G.B. Gelikman, *Istoriya obshchestvennyh dvizhenij evreev v Polshe i Rosii* ("History of Jewish Social Movements in Poland and Russia"), Moskva 1930.

²⁶ V.V. Bartold, *Sochineniya v 9 tomah* ("Collected Works in 9 Volumes"), Moskva 1963-1967; E. S. Bertels, *Izbrannye trudy. Istoriya literatury i kultury Irana* ("Selected Works. Iranian Literature and Culture History"), Moskva 1988; the same author, *Sufizm i sufistskaya literatura* ("Sufism and Sufi Literature"), Moskva 1965.

²⁷ See: N. A. Smirnov, *Pjatdesyat let sovetskogo islamovedeniya/Voprosy nauchnogo ateizma.-Vypusk 4* ("Fifty Years of Soviet Islam Studies/ Problems of Scientific Atheism".-Issue 4), Moskva 1967, p. 406-427; T. A. Stetskevich, *Nekotorye aktualnye problemy istorii Islama v sovremennoy sovetskoy istoriografii/ Ateizm, religiya, sovremennost* ("Some Topical Problems of Islamic History in Contemporary Soviet Historiography/ Atheism, Religion, Present Day"), Leningrad 1977, p. 150-165.

²⁸ See: G. M. Livshits, *Ocherki istoriografii Biblii i rannego hristianstva* ("Essays on the Historiography of the Bible and Early Christianity"), Minsk 1970.

²⁹ See: I. R. Grigulevich, *Vatikan* ("Vatican"), Moskva 1957; *Mjatezhnaya tserkov v Latinskov Amerike* ("Rebellious Church in Latin America"), Moskva 1972; *Istoriya inkvizitsii* ("History of the Inquisition"), Moskva 1970; *Krest i mech. Katalicheskaya tserkov v испanskay Amerike XYI-XYIII vekov* ("Cross and Sword. The Catholic Church in Spanish America in the 16th-18th Centuries"), Moskva 1977, etc.

³⁰ See: M. M. Smirin, *Narodnaya reformatiya Tomasa Mjuntsera i Velikaya krestjanskaya voyna* ("Popular Reformation of Thomas Müntzer and the Great Peasant War"), Moskva 1955, 1978; A. N. Chanyshhev, *Protestantizm* ("Protestantism"), Moskva 1969; V. I. Garadzha, *Protestantizm* ("Protestantism"), Moskva 1971; *Filosofiya epohi rannih burzhuaznyh revolutsij* ("Philosophy in the Period of Early Bourgeois Revolutions"), Moskva 1983, etc.

³¹ See: Historiographical reviews by L. I. Emeljakh in the State Museum of the History of Religion Works Collections in 1989-1990.

³² See: *Nauchno-ateisticheskie issledovaniya v muzeyah* ("Scientific Atheist Research in Museums"), Leningrad 1984, p. 6-13; *Sovetskaya etnografiya* ("Soviet Ethnography"), 1979, No 3; 1981, No 1.

PRIESTHOODS IN MEDITERRANEAN RELIGIONS

TÜBINGEN WORK GROUP¹

Review article

MARY BEARD-JOHN NORTH (Eds.), *Pagan Priests. Religion and Power in the Ancient World*. London: Gerald Duckworth 1990 (XI, 266 p., 31 fig.)
ISBN 0 7156 2206 4 £ 13.00

1. *The Book*

1.1 The present work is one of the first comparative descriptions of priesthood of the classical Mediterranean high cultures from the 6th century B.C. to the 4th century A.D., along with an abrupt excursion into the Mycenaean period.² The book originated in a series of seminars on "Priests and Power" at the Institute of Classical Studies in London. Hence behind the themes there is—as a leitmotiv of the book—the problem of connection or separation of religion and politics in the ancient world.³ The framework is provided by the "forms of power in the state" in their entirety, among which priestly power is to be located. This "theory", however, has not been fully developed in this volume (p. 14). It is within this framework of constitution and law that "the category of priest in the individual society" (p. 2) is to be defined. Here again "not a complete general theory of priesthood" (p. 1) is to be developed, but common features and some general conclusions of the nature of pagan priesthood "as a whole". The most important category is the specifically Christian idea of mediation between men and gods, once explicitly rejected by Georg Wissowa⁴ (see 3.3). Sometimes the word 'communication' is used instead of 'mediation'; it is striking that the authors seem to take account only of 'vertical' relations between gods and men, and not of communication between men.

It is quite understandable that the Judean and Christian counterparts of pagan priesthood are not dealt with. Less understandable is the absence of the graeco-oriental priesthoods, the so-called mystery religions, as well as of the 'societies' (*thiasoi, collegia*).⁵ It does not become entirely clear, therefore, what types of 'congregation' could emerge within the non-Christian cults or how the roles of the teacher, pastor, or spiritual guide were able to develop.⁶ The cult of Juppiter Dolichenus provides an example of the diversity of offices which developed in the non-Christian cults:

documented are a high priest, full-time priest, candidates for the priesthood and their guides (*pater candidatorum*), a *curator* of the temple, and various cult-workers; the ‘congregation’ is referred to as *colitores*.⁷

The material used for the development of terminology and theory is, for the most part (about one half of the volume), the religion of the Roman Republic (pp. 17-71) and of imperial Rome (pp. 177-255). The oriental cultures are represented by relatively late and selective material—Nabonidus and the priests of Babylon in the 6th century, the high priests of Memphis in the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C. Bronze-age Pylos and classical Athens in the 5th century represent the countless cults of Hellas (pp. 157-174; 73-91).⁸

The selection is held together by the introduction presenting theories of priesthoods as well as by editorial inserts preceding the individual contributions which provide helpful synchronisms between the Mediterranean cultures, establish comparative relationships, and moderate the terminological discrepancies.

An index and a rather disparate “bibliography” conclude the volume.

1.2. The State of Research

- a) The editors and authors are well known through numerous studies in the field of ancient Roman religion and are pursuing comprehensive plans for comparative studies and the development of theory (p. 28, n. 30). Thanks to numerous analyses of specific material as well as a number of general monographs on Roman religion, there is now a good opportunity for a comparative work (cf. section IV: Bibliography). G.J. Szemler (1972), L. Schumacher (1973/78) and J. Scheid (1975, 1990) have followed the tradition of C. Cichorius, F. Münzer, and T.R.S. Broughton and collected the prosopographies of the Roman priests, interpreting them under pre-dominantly historical and sociological aspects: background, career, sequence of political and priestly offices, the distribution of patricians and plebeians, “old” and “new” families among the various priesthoods, thus contributing important groundwork to the topic ‘priests and power’. The authoritative monograph on a single priesthood has come from Ronald Syme (1980); it also deals with the status of the Arval-Brotherhood in Roman society (“Ritual and Society”) and provides crucial references regarding the history of the transmission of the Dea Dia.⁹
- b) A theological counter-piece to the sociological and comparative approaches of the philologists and historians is the work of the Würzburg archaeologist Erika Simon. Two decades after “Die Götter der Griechen” (1969) we now have the sequel: “Die Götter der Römer” (1990). The

author's long-time and intimate acquaintance with the monuments have resulted in a unified and personal work which illuminates purposefully and convincingly the non-visual classic works by Georg Wissowa (1st edition 1902) and—despite an appendix of plates—of Kurt Latte (1960), without duplicating or replacing *The Iconography of Roman Religion* by Robert Turcan (1988).

The basic data regarding festivals and rites are treated briefly; the focus is on interpreting the meaning of mythical figures and personifications in their artistic form. Isolated, in alphabetical order, and without historical narrative, gods are made visible, as it were, as being and form, as effect and element. Attention is being focused on, and limited to, works of art. Their architectonic context, the implements used for the veneration of the cult image, and the people presenting themselves in these symbolic acts remain at the periphery. Another notable difference compared to the volume by Beard-North is the archaic perspective: "... in religion the older tends to be superior to the younger" (Simon, p. 9). The assumption that at the beginning there is the essence, points back to prehistory, to the primeval, "to matriarchic times" (Simon, p. 44). This results in a noticeable discrepancy between the visual material which provides the richest documentation for the period of Augustus, and an interpretation intended to lead back to the "earliest possible levels" (Simon, p. 13).

2. *The Contributions*

2.1 "Priesthood in the Roman Republic" (Mary Beard) and "Diviners and Divination at Roman" (John North)

a) M. Beard deals with the priests of the Roman Republic in toto. She starts out with the well-known "diversity of Roman priesthoods" and the diffusion of their authority and focuses her investigation on the "function of mediation between gods and men" (p. 29). According to her thesis, none of the priesthoods but rather the Senate plays the central role as mediator. The augurs who have direct contact with the gods are subordinate to the Senate. The *pontifices* have little to do with divine contact but mediate rather between the central authorities and individuals; they, too, are subordinate to the Senate. This confirms what has been known for some time (e.g. cf. G.J. Szemler): the Roman priests are specialists assigned to the Senate, which has the highest, although not clearly defined, religious authority. Despite their special knowledge the priests have no power of their own because of the "fragmentation of priestly authority" (p. 42). Hence we see a broad dissemination of that power among the leading elite and a corresponding lack of a clear priestly hierar-

chy as well as of a generic concept of “priest”. That *sacerdos* achieved that meaning “rather late” and only through hellenistic influences (p. 46 f.) in the absence of any pre-hellenistic documents, is as difficult to prove as it is to disprove.

b) J. North refers to the wide spread of divination and investigates the well-known connection between the exercise of power and divination. A subordinate may not make use of divination against his master (p. 60). But the frequent practice of divination in routine situations speaks against the general interpretation of divination as an aid in reaching critical decisions. Divination does have a stabilizing effect in crisis situations, but that is a function of all rituals. An important characteristic of Roman divination is its anonymity. According to North, the auspices serve as an indication of political power and as a source of legitimacy. Yet they do not contribute to the concentration but rather to the distribution of the power of the individual. Once again, Roman religion is shown to be the construct of an elite for the purpose of exercising political control.

c) An interpretation of ancient priesthoods within the framework of a given political system is fruitful but necessarily incomplete. By choosing that framework the presentation concentrates on *pontifices*, *augures*, *haruspices*, and *decemviri*, but excludes many other priesthoods (*flamines*, *Vestales*, *Salii*, *fetiales*, *arvales*). They, too, contribute to the variety and diffusion of priestly authority, but the apparently lesser degree of interaction on their part with the political system is not being examined. Hence these significant priesthoods have been excluded from an investigation of pagan priests. Beard limits society to the ruling elite of urban Rome. North makes only brief mention of private divination and of the impact of State divination on the so-called masses. Those limitations, too, exclude important aspects of Roman priesthood, such as the participation of women in public, private and state cults.

2.2 “Priests and Power in Classical Athens” (Robert Garland)

Garland organizes his investigation along the following questions: 1) Who represents the state religion (authority, control)? 2) How are innovations introduced? 3) What was the status and influence of oracles and seers? 4) Through what channels was mediation between gods and men conducted?

The general results of this study of democratic 5th century Athens are the same as in the case of the Roman Republic: “Religious function and religious authority in classical Athens were diffused and non-centralized” (p. 75), and this is the case on the social as well as on the political level. The religious specialists have no exclusive powers. The diffusion of religious authority in classical Athens, according to Garland, mirrors the

diffusion of political authority (p. 91). Directives regarding religious matters are issued by the *demos*, which “arrogated to itself as much power as possible”.

2.3 “The High Priests of Memphis under Ptolemaic Rule” (Dorothy J. Thompson)

The subject of this chapter is a prosopographically well documented and well researched priestly family which shows the intertwining of political and religious power over a time-span of 300 years.¹⁰

Normally, the son inherited the priestly office from the father. Since in two documented cases the office holders are very young, the author concludes that family tradition was more important than professional qualification. The taking on of additional priestly offices as well as the employment of wives as priestesses or musicians shows that social and financial prestige were the main reasons for taking over priesthoods.

The arrangement between the priesthood and the new dynasty was advantageous for both parties: by recognizing the Ptolemies as ‘Pharaos’ the priests possessed the needed ‘guarantees of carrying out the cult’,¹¹ retained control over their temple properties, but had to pay taxes (ca. 10% of the annual income; they did, however, receive royal subventions for financing the cult). The advantage for the Ptolemies lay in the reconciliation of the native population to foreign rule, e.g. through subvention of the cult and financing of building temples, but above all in the religious legitimization of their rule and the establishment of their own cult. The reciprocity of religious and political power recognizable, for example, in the dual coronation of Ptolemy V—secular in Alexandria, priestly in Memphis—led, as in the case described above, to a mutually lucrative “collaboration”. This aspect has been given too little attention in previous studies of the family of the high priests of Ptah in Memphis. Nevertheless, for the purpose of a general work on “pagan priests” the author places too much emphasis on a special case under particular political conditions—in spite of a helpful series of general definitions pertaining to priesthood in Egypt (pp. 98 ff.). The cultic responsibilities of the priests, their hierarchical division into classes, their strict regulations regarding dress and tonsure which identified them as a socially notable group, again do not fit the ‘political’ frame.

2.4 “Nabonidus and the Babylonian Priesthood” (Amélie Kuhrt)

The title of Kuhrt’s article makes clear that the author commences her study of the Neo-Babylonian priesthood with the historical events surrounding the fall of the same. Since the “verse account”,¹² a description

of the political upheavals in Mesopotamia at that time and written from a Persian point of view, came to light it was believed that Cyrus II could reckon with the support of a priesthood dissatisfied with the religious policies of Nabonidus when he conquered Babylon in 539 B.C. Kuhrt's study concerns itself mainly with this historical question in order to reach a definition of priesthood.

Since it would be inappropriate here to present the results of Kuhrt's investigation of the historical situation, only her definition of priesthood based upon those results shall be dealt with in the following. Basing her hypothesis on the inscriptions of both Nabonidus and the Persian kings as well as the Nabonidus Chronicle and the Verse Accounts, Kuhrt's investigation of the historical situation at the end of the Neo-Babylonian empire proposes a new model: one that relativizes the role of the priesthood. Her second step is to test the theory as to whether there was a theological conflict between Nabonidus and the Babylonian priesthood and whether there is any textual evidence for dissatisfaction on the part of the priesthood which the Persians might have been able to exploit. The rest of the article examines whether or not there is any proof of royal interference in the temple economy during Nabonidus' reign.

Her investigations conclude by questioning the validity of the term 'priest' during the Neo-Babylonian period. This, in turn, raises the question as to whether one may presuppose a dichotomy between 'Church' and State similar to that of the Middle Ages and the modern period which includes a division of interests and power between monarchy and priesthood. By examining this question she hopes to elucidate whether a conflict between these two power bases might have led to the downfall of Babylonia.¹³

In the final part of her work Kuhrt investigates the cultic personnel. She points out that there is no term in Akkadian for "priest" per se. However, this does not have to mean that certain terms used in different contexts cannot have specific connotations. It has already been noted that the Akkadian word *šangu* has a much larger field of definition than just 'cultic specialist'.¹⁴ In the Nabonidus Inscription the *mār bānē*¹⁵ (free men) and *šangu* surely represent the owners of landed estates and the temple personnel (with both cultic and administrative duties) as representatives of two different social groups opposing one another. The meaning of this term can be more precisely defined when one notes that the Neo-Assyrian kings used it as one of their titles, i.e. they called themselves *šangu*.¹⁶ This term expresses above all the cultic duties which they had to carry out for the deity, such as evident from the Neo-Assyrian rituals, in which the king had the most important role.¹⁷

The description of the bureaucratic apparatus and the cultic personnel is based largely on the work of H.M. Kümmel.¹⁸ As Kuhrt points out the temple employees, with the exception of the craftsmen and temple slaves, came from the group known juristically as *mār bānē*. Many families belonging to this group had a traditional connexion with certain temple offices. The bearer of a specific office, or his representative, was obliged to carry out cultic duties alongside of his religious ones. The transferability of such offices as well as the sources of income and investments which went along with them show that no clear differentiation can be made between ‘secular’ and religious spheres. If one were to investigate whether or not there was a class in Babylonia during the first millennium B.C. which could be described by “priesthood”, then one must not only pay attention to the economic condition, but also whether there is any evidence of rituals, on the religio-cultic level, such as initiation rites, in which a certain group was differentiated from the rest of the cultic personnel. K. Deller, in his treatise on the temple personnel of the Assur Temple during the Neo-Assyrian era, shows that the LÚ.GAL NINDA.MEŠ, the “chief of the bakers” of the Assur Temple was obligated to take part in an initiation ceremony (*gallubu*).¹⁹ This seems to indicate that, at least for this type of ceremony, artisans and bureaucratic personnel were obliged to purview themselves. This can be used as further evidence for Kuhrt’s view that “priesthood”, in the Judeo-Christian sense, cannot be applied to Babylonia. On the other hand there must have been a group of people who were chiefly concerned with the fixation of rituals and theological works, having such a high degree of specialization that they stood out among the other bureaucrats in the temple administration. This becomes clear when one examines the colophons which describe certain texts as secrets only be made available to certain specialists. The said group of persons is neither described nor dealt with any further by Kuhrt. It is questionable, however, whether or not this group would have been able to gain any political weight.

Compared with earlier discussions in which the downfall of Babylonia was considered to have been the product of a priesthood collaborating with the foe, Kuhrt manages to provide a more complex assessment of the causes leading to the end of the Babylonian Empire by placing more emphasis on the historico-military events. A separate investigation of the temple personnel on the socio-economic level leads her to a different point of view with regard to the structure of the temple personnel, which prohibits any definition of “priesthood” in the traditional sense of the word.

2.5 “Cult-Personnel in the Linear B Text from Pylos” (James Hooker)
J. Hooker’s lucid study with its rich material shows the complexity of the

development of the cult and its connection to diverse segments of the population already in the 13th century B.C. According to Hooker's rather forced interpretation there was "a clear demarcation" between the religious and political spheres (p. 168-Ep. 704).²⁰ The task of a history of Mycenaean religion—especially in a collection of comparative essays—to establish a connection between the old-oriental centers and the succeeding and border cultures of the late old-oriental period has not been realized here. The appended Mycenaean original texts are impressive but of no use for the prospective readers of this volume since a translation has not been provided.

2.6 "From Republic to Principate"- "The Veil of Power"- "Religion in the Roman Empire" (Richard Gordon)

- a) For his contribution Richard Gordon establishes his own basis by sketching the religion of imperial Rome with sociological and religio-critical concepts. For him, sacrifice is the reflection of a labor-sharing society; Roman iconography, therefore, does not depict the communicative aspect of sacrifice (p. 205 f.). The sacrificial system masks the lack of political structures, fixates the reciprocity between unequals, furthers providential beneficence, and creates changelessness (p. 229). Philanthropy is a part of the technique of rulership, humanism a mask of Roman imperialism (pp. 228 f., 231, 235 ff.). In this view, the utopian content of the stoic teaching regarding reason, goodness, equality, and educability of all human beings is being suppressed; still, realpolitical reduction is preferable to humanistic educational jargon.
- b) After these general and stimulating observations Gordon proceeds to the topic of the volume by limiting the religion of imperial Rome to the sacrificial system and to the ruling political elite. In Gordon's view, sex roles, family structure, rules for food, "in short, our way of life" (p. 252) are fixated in that system—which seems a rather unmediated and undialectical connection between religion and society as well as an overburdening of the sacrificial system. At the center of the system Gordon sees the emperor as sacrificer "or/and" priest (p. 201 f.), a combination which reveals the breakdown of the terminology. The emperor is said to cumulate the "sacerdotal roles" (p. 183) and thus represents "the close nexus between sacrifice, benefaction, and domination by the elite" which, according to Gordon (p. 235), is the Roman model of priesthood. The sacrificial system is part of imperial euergetism, constitutes an important link between center and periphery (p. 231),²¹ and serves the Romans to camouflage their power. The Romans tried to impose their model of priesthood and religious organization on the varied cultures of the Empire

(p. 233 f.); the conquerors, as Gordon supposes, eradicated “competing religious alternatives” (p. 233 f.).

The history of pre-Roman Asia Minor, however, shows that the Greeks already tried to control the so-called temple-states. Whether the Druids or the Jews, the only examples of eradication cited by Gordon, constitute borderline cases or especially well known normal cases (thus Gordon, p. 243 f.), is left open.

c) A few comments on this encompassing and interesting construction are in order here, especially with regard to the specific topic of the volume. The reduction of Roman religion and its priesthoods to a sacrificial system or “civic religion” is problematic. By such a restriction those priesthoods that are not part of the political elite are being excluded. Those priests, however, did not engage exclusively in magic and superstition.²²

The cumulation of sacerdotal roles by the emperor has been observed correctly, but the emperor also had many other roles (orator, military commander-in-chief, god). Only 20 of the 230 extant statues of Augustus depict him as sacrificer. How many depict him as a priest, Gordon does not say (p. 212). The depiction of the sacrificing ruler “at the same time evoked the euergetes”, but none of the numerous and useful illustrations provided by Gordon show any connection between sacrifice and benefaction, nor do they depict the imperial priest in the service of his euergetism. Not even the distribution of the sacrifice is documented; the act of sacrificing as work, order, billing seems to be the decisive issue for the Romans of the imperial period (cf. p. 205). The connection between euergetism and priesthood is nowhere documented; the inaugural meal of a priest is not a feeding of the people, and the *summa honoraria* at the inauguration cannot be documented by an anecdote from Suetonius’ *Caligula*. It seems, then, that the central thesis, namely that in his role as priest and sacrificer the emperor was originator as well as guarantor of the euergetistic system, has not been proven. Especially noteworthy is the fact that Gordon does not deal at all with the various kinds of priests of the imperial cult itself.

3. Retrospect and Prospect

3.1 A general view of the illustrations, the discussion of women, and conceptional developments in the volume as a whole shall conclude this review.

We welcome, in principle, the inclusion of 31 illustrations in this volume. However, the coordination of pictures and text does not always work. Classical Athens is represented by two vase paintings and a relief: a young woman—but not a priestess—at a sacrifice; a man and a woman from the Parthenon-frieze, “probably a magistrate, perhaps a

priestess"—this does not elucidate the problem of how to distinguish between participants in the cult, actors, and functionaries. Finally, there is a sacrifice to Dionysos by two women, "probably maenads": this is not exactly a contribution to the iconography of Greek priesthoods. Not one of the many pictures of sacrifices from imperial Rome illustrates the topic 'emperor-priesthood-euergetism'.

A *culullus* is not an axe (fig. 3). L. Lartius, the priest of Bellona, supposedly rolls his eyes and dances ecstatically (fig. 31): but he stands relaxed and dignified; what is referred to as a "whip" is just a branch, and also his so-called double-axes do not serve for "self-flagellation". The most important sign of his dignity is not even mentioned: Lartius is wearing a laurel wreath with three medallions.

3.2 The methodological principle of the "inseparability of religion and politics" (pp. 7, 33 and *passim*) leaves little room for social groupings with priestly functions outside the political happenings. The treatment of women with priestly functions—after all, a group in the religions of antiquity that cannot be neglected—may be seen as an indicator of the methodological onesidedness of the contributions. The description of a Vestal funeral at the beginning of the book and a compelling characterization of the witch Erichtho at the end, do give the volume a decorative frame. However, gender does not even emerge thematically in connection with the problem of translating the word *sacerdos*. As for the rest, female 'priests' are being excluded by the political screen; this screen turns the special case, the unusual, into normality. Closer consideration of the inscriptions, however, gives us a different picture. Gordon, who deals with the imperial period and provincial societies, has not explained female *sacerdotes* even when they appear unexpectedly in inscriptions; for him they are "honorary men" (p. 230). The role of the cult of empresses and its significance for the female segments of society is not mentioned at all, neither is the increase in priestly positions for women in the provinces.

One of the concerns of Beard/North, namely, "to pinpoint 'priesthood' within the social and political structure of the ancient city" (p. 9) is evidently aimed more at the political than at the social realm. The investigations are limited to priestly functions insofar as they are of significance for the socio-political public and, therefore, leave no room for gender-oriented questions. But as long as male-oriented measures of what is of political and public significance constitute the sole criteria, then inevitably only those women can be dealt with who have left the typically 'female' realms of activity and who constitute exceptional or borderline cases that cannot be considered representative. The *virgines Vestae* and the witch Erichtho, along with the illustrations seem, therefore, to serve a

decorative and exotic purpose in this volume, and to provide another shiny facet of the “lure” described by Beard in the introduction. But they do not contribute to any fruitful discussion leading to a deeper understanding of the activities of women in Roman religion. The sought-after gender-neutrality of this volume remains very much a surface decoration.

3.3 The editors’ criticism of the usual terminology is justified (p. 2 ff.). The label ‘priest’ (Priester, prêtre, prete) covers up the religious and functional differences within and between the various cultures. The conceptional field developed by Max Weber—magi, charismatics, prophets—is insufficient for the non-Jewish and non-Christian cultures of antiquity. For that reason, the editors and some of the authors introduce the expression “mediation between gods and men” which is meant to serve as a general category which would span the various cultures.²³ This expression, however, is neither explained nor embedded in a field of conceptions, nor is it made operative by indicating criteria of application to different cultures.²⁴ The principle, that “we cannot apply our society’s criteria”²⁵ is, as such, objectionable. If allowed to stand initially then it must be noted that the use of the term “mediation” contradicts this principle, because “mediation” is a specific concept of Western Christianity. *Mediator-MESITES* is a Christian term based on Hebrews 6-8, where the CHRISTOS is called the true ARCHIEREVS “in the succession of Melchizedek”. As Son of God, etc. he is a priest “for ever” (Ps. 110) and, therefore, exceeds the Jewish priesthood after the order of the Levites or of Aaron. This Christ is the “guarantor” (*EGGYOS*) of the “new covenant”.²⁶ For that reason, “mediation” as a general term is inappropriate for the comparative history of religion.

The editors are not unaware of this difficulty; they propose to use the word mediation “relatively restrictively”; if not “we would be in the unhelpful (if not absurd) position of calling every Roman adult male (!) a priest” (p. 9). This relation and restriction, however, as has been said, is not pointed out. That is why in this volume, as we have shown, a distinction between participant, sacrificer and priest cannot be realized.

In spite of these scruples the reviewers are convinced that this book will help to move the comparative history of religion away from divinities and towards the inquiry into fundamental institutions of the religious systems.²⁷

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¹ Andreas Bendlin, Hubert Cancik, Ulrike Egelhaaf, Gudrun Fischer, Christoph Rottler, Jörg Rüpke.—Beate Pongratz-Leisten (2.4); Sabine Schloz (2.3).

² The announcement of "two thousand years before the rise of Christianity" forgets, on the one hand, the contributions of R. Gordon who treats the post-Christian period and, on the other hand, disappoints expectations of studies on the priesthoods of Mesopotamia, Asia Minor, Syria or Egypt during the Bronze Age in this volume.

³ The terminology is inconsistent, as may be demonstrated by a small choice: interrelationship, overlap, fusion, interaction, interplay, interdependence and so on.

⁴ *Religion und Kultus der Römer*, München 21912, 479f.

⁵ One of the few texts provided for this topic does not deal (as indicated on p.

12) with the request “to become a priest (of Isis)” and not with any “priestly calling” for Lucius; at issue for Apuleius, *Met.* 11, 21 is initiation into the mystery, not initiation into the priesthood.

⁶ The difference sacrificial/non-sacrificial is not the decisive difference between the non-Christian/Christian role of the priest.

⁷ Cf. CIL VI 406 = 30758.

⁸ Surprisingly there is a considerable diachronic gap between the articles on Classical Athens (V BC) and Republican Rome (I BC). Thus major changes in Hellenistic religious mentality are missed, esp. the evolution of ruler-cult, its beginnings within the framework of Classical Greece and the subsequent instrumentalisation and concentration of hitherto “diffused religious authorities” (2.2).

⁹ But see M. Beard’s justly critical remarks on Syme’s limitations in her review of John Scheid, *Romulus et ses Frères. Le collège des Frères Arvales, modèle du culte public dans la Rome des Empereurs*, Rome 1990, in *TLS* 25/10/1991, p. 7.

¹⁰ Cf. Janet H. Johnson, “The Role of the Egyptian Priesthood in Ptolemaic Egypt”, in: Leonard H. Lesko (ed.), *Egyptological Studies in Honor of Richard A. Parker* Hannover, N.H., 1986; Thompson, *Memphis under the Ptolemies*, Princeton, N.J. 1888 and the review of this book by R. Bogaert, in *Gnomon* 61 (1990) 609-612.

¹¹ Cf. Erich Winter, “Der Herrscherkult in den ägyptischen Ptolemäertempeln”, in: Herwig Maehler, Volker Michael Strocka (eds.), *Das ptolemäische Ägypten*, Mainz 1978, 147.

¹² S. Smith, *Babylonian Historical Texts*, New York 1975 (reprint), Pl. V-X.

¹³ With regards to the Nabonidus Inscription of the historical events s. P.-A. Bedaulieu, *The Reign of Nabonidus* (New Haven and London 1989) not yet available to Kuhrt. A new work dealing with this complex of questions is P. Högemann, Das Alte Vorderasien und die Achämeniden. Die vorderasiatischen Herrschaftsformen und ihre Rezeption durch die Perser von Kyros dem Großen bis Dareios I, *TAVO* B. 98, 150 (in print).

¹⁴ B. Menzel, *Assyrische Tempel*, vol. 1 (Rom 1981) 130 ff. K. Deller, *BAM* 16 (1985) 243.

¹⁵ Concerning the term *mār bānē* s. M. Dandaméev, “The Neo-Babylonian Citizens”, *Klio* 63 (1981) 45-48.

¹⁶ Cf. M.-J. Seux, *Epithètes royales*, Paris 1967, 287 f.

¹⁷ Cf. the collection of ritual texts in B. Menzel, *Assyrische Tempel*, Bd. 2, Rom 1981.

¹⁸ H.M. Kümmel, *Familie, Beruf und Amt im spätbabylonischen Uruk: Prosopographische Untersuchungen zu Berufsgruppen des 6. Jahrhunderts v. Chr. in Uruk*, Berlin 1979.

¹⁹ K. Deller, *BAM* 16 (1985) 369. B. Menzel, a.a.O., 191.

²⁰ Cf. M. Ventris-J.H. Chadwick, Documents nr. 135; cf. nr. 140.

²¹ Cf. Paul Veyne, *Le pain et le cirque*, 1976.

²² Cf. pp. 234 ff., 244 ff., 247 f., 252.

²³ Cf. pp. 29, 33, 41, 75.

²⁴ The following differentiation among agents of symbolic actions may be proposed: actor, participant, expert, official, sacerdotal role, cult-worker, virtuoso (e.g. ascetic), pastor.

²⁵ p. 6: cf. p. 157.

²⁶ Cf. the encyclica “Mediator Dei” on liturgy, in: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 39, 1947.

²⁷ Cf. p. 201.

BOOK REVIEWS

WILLIAM E. PADEN, *Interpreting the Sacred: Ways of Viewing Religion*. Boston: Beacon Press 1992 (XI, 157 p.) ISBN 0 8070 7706 2 US \$24.95

Interpreting the Sacred: Ways of Viewing Religion is the second book by Professor Paden on the nature of the study of religion. In his earlier *Religious Worlds: The Comparative Study of Religions* he argued for replacing “classical explanatory models [of religion] that pictured humans as primarily cognitive beings, and religions as so many set of beliefs” (57) with the notion of ‘religious worlds’ formed around a sacred locus. Such a notion, he maintained, is metaphysically neutral and allows for the study of religion as the study of a wide variety of things that sustain human life and are designed to shape the overall way one perceives existence. In *Interpreting the Sacred* Paden seems to continue the argument he began there in that his intent in the new work is not to present a view or theory of religion but rather to enlighten his readers as to the role of views or theories “in revealing a subject like this” (ix). The structure of the argument in this volume is not complex: chapters one and two deal philosophically (abstractly) with the notion of interpretation and the interpretive framework, and with the critical response to religion in the development of western culture out of which, according to Paden, one can get some sense “of what is at stake in interpretation...” (15). In chapters three through six he analyzes the structures of a variety of interpretive frames—sociological, psychological, comparative and religious—and their implications when used in coming to an understanding of religious phenomena. In each case he concludes his analysis with a critique of the proposed interpretive framework, trying to highlight the specific weaknesses of each when applied to religious data. The closing chapters, (seven and eight), return to themes raised in chapter one and attempt to provide something of a philosophical justification for a new framework for the study of religion—“an interpretive paradigm” or “reciprocity model”—that provides a genuine alternative to the two traditional views of knowledge (the objective and the subjective) within which the study of religion has until now been undertaken (although, in his opinion as elaborated in chapters three through six, without much success). The new paradigm/model, unlike its predecessors, involves neither dogmatism nor scepticism (relativism) according to Paden, for in recognizing what is of value in each of the traditional epistemologies it allows one to see “that

the world ‘gives’ itself to humans in the very act of interpretation [with the consequence that] whether scientifically or religiously, we receive the world according to the framework or equipment of our understanding” (131).

In *Religious Worlds* Paden’s explications of the notions of ‘myth,’ ‘ritual and time,’ ‘gods and purity,’ and so on, in light of his understanding of the primary notion of ‘world(s)’ provided a reasonably neutral framework for coming to a descriptive understanding of particular religious traditions—for understanding the ‘religiously other.’ And it appears to be Paden’s intention that the argument of *Interpreting the Sacred* provides justification for such a claim of metaphysical neutrality. According to Paden, that is, “[t]he force of this relational point of view is that it acknowledges the relativity of reality to human constructs of it, without denying that there is anything outside of our own views” (132). This, it seems, shows that the new paradigm is capable of avoiding the reductionism of an objective scientific approach to the data without falling into a simple idealistic subjectivism. No persuasive argument in support of such a neo-Kantianism however is provided. Other serious difficulties, moreover, characterize the new paradigm. It appears, for example, that Paden is not able to explicate the nature of the reciprocity model without involving himself in contradiction. Despite admitting that even though there is no cognitive access to the world outside our view of it Paden seems nevertheless to maintain that our projections of meaning onto that world are nothing short of intellectual representations of it, for, as he puts it, “[m]eaning is not ‘just’ self-made; it is the connection humans make with objects, wherein part of the object shows itself back to us in meaningful terms” (132). Thus, even though Paden insists that interpreting is an act, rather than simply providing a theory, with the implication that talk about religion is not just thinking something but rather doing something, such an act still presupposes some intellectualist understanding of the reality supposedly being acted upon. And it is difficult to see at this point how Paden’s understanding of interpretation here really differs from the notions of explanation that rely upon theory. Indeed, if it were not, in a significant sense, similar, it would make it extremely difficult to know what sense is to be made of Paden’s admission that misinterpretation is possible (125) or his claim that his understanding of relativity does not imply the impossibility of making judgments or even having one’s own absolutes (134).

Unlike *Religious Worlds* I find *Interpreting the Sacred* a problematic book. The first presents a framework within which to achieve a descriptive understanding of religious phenomena whereas the second attempts to

provide a justification for adopting such a descriptive account as precluding the need for explanation. Paden's discussion/analysis of interpretation, moreover, raises more questions than it answers. Though Paden contrasts interpretation with explanation it is not at all clear that interpretation in his own view is not simply another kind of explanation. But if that were not to be the case it would seem that interpretation is the kind of activity that is undertaken when there is uncertainty as to how properly to proceed in the study of a particular phenomenon and is therefore simply a preliminary step before proceeding to search for an explanation. In either case the notion of interpretation in the study of religion as Paden treats it leaves one at a loss as to the ultimate value of such a relativistic approach in coming to see religious behaviour for what it is.

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HANS WALDENFELS, *Begegnung der Religionen*. Theologische Versuche I—
Bonn: Verlag Norbert Maria Borengässer 1990 (XI + 377 p.) ISBN
3-923946-18-X DM 43.80

This is the first volume in a new series entitled "Kontextuell-dialogische Studien zur Theologie der Kulturen und Religionen". Judging from its content, one would expect promising contributions of similar interest and high quality in the future. The author places the Christian theological task squarely within the context of a religiously and culturally pluralistic world and prefers to entitle his reflections "encounter of religions" rather than "dialogue", an experience and concept which have very specific connotations whilst much of the contact between different religions occurs within contexts where these do not necessarily apply.

The book consists of 15 essays, an epilogue and prologue which, apart from the latter, have all been published before in journals or books. Most of these have appeared in the 1980's although one goes back as far as 1967. The chapters are conveniently grouped together into three different parts which are thematically interconnected but neatly divided into five chapters each, with clear and convenient subheadings guiding the reader. The book can be read continuously; alternatively, individual chapters can be read on their own at random as each presents a complete unit in itself. One or two contain somewhat more extraneous material than others, but

all are of interest and provided with substantial bibliographical references, mainly to German publications though some works in English (including those of Japanese and Indian authors) are also cited. The book is a direct edition of a camera-ready typescript produced to a high standard, in very readable format.

Part I groups together essays dealing with the “theology of religions”. They largely discuss material from a Roman Catholic perspective and deal with questions raised by Rahner’s theological work and by decrees of Vatican II. The author carefully considers how the Council’s postulate for dialogue has to be addressed today within a global context where the hegemony of western thinking (including the dominance of western Christian thought) has collapsed and where theology, or rather the task of theologising, meets a new horizon in the plurality of religious traditions found around the globe. It is perhaps no accident that the author begins the prologue with his own account of discovering the cultures of the East, especially Japan, in 1956 when he realised for the first time that Christianity is represented by a minority rather than being the dominant culture in many countries of the world. Elsewhere in the book he makes the plea for studying Christianity not only theologically, but also from the perspective of “Religionswissenschaft”. He also discusses the relationship between theology and “Religionswissenschaft” (see especially ch. 5) and points out that the study of religions has perhaps been more hindered than helped in Germany by the institutional structure of theological faculties, organised along confessional lines. Also worth noting is his observation that it is perhaps less appropriate to speak of secularization or the “death of religion” than of the encounter with the pluralism of religions in contemporary societies where no single religion is normative. This is indeed a new challenge for any systematic theological reflection, and not only for Christian theology.

Part II of the book considers “Specific Questions in the Area of Religions”. Whilst there is much of interest here, there is also much that is familiar as the chapters contain very basic, expository material on Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and new religious movements (giving a very summary view on the situation in Germany). The most interesting chapter deals with the process of secularisation in Asia, mainly in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Japan. This chapter also contains some brief definitional and analytical considerations about the connotations of “secularisation” and its various German equivalents, pointing out how much the concept is of western origin, and yet it has been adopted for widespread use in Asian discussions (when taking place in English).

The chapters in Part III deal with theological and philosophical issues

pertaining to Christian self-understanding. Here some challenging, and one might say perennial, questions about claims to truth and their criteria, and about the "absolute" nature of the Christian revelation are raised in a very sensitive manner which invite more detailed philosophical discussion than is possible in a book review. The last chapter deals with Christianity within the context of contemporary pluralism. Here Waldenfels characterises our age as "Postchristliche Moderne" and discusses its characteristics in relation to Christianity as traditionally understood, and the incompleteness of this understanding. Refreshingly sharp questions are raised here—namely, what God do the Christian churches really preach? And how far have Christian theology and self-understanding remained far too eurocentric? How far will dialogue and a shared "dia-praxis" between members of different faiths, and especially between Christians and adherents of Asian religions, lead to a creative renewal and reconceptualisation of the Christian theological task?

The Epilogue sets this into a practical context by providing a succinct statement on the joint responsibility of religions for promoting peace, rather than dissent, hatred and war, in the contemporary world.

The book can be highly recommended. It combines challenging intellectual with experiential and practical perspectives which will appeal to a wide general readership as well as to academics interested in the encounter of religions.

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JOHN B. HENDERSON, *Scripture, Canon, and Commentary. A Comparison of Confucian and Western Exegesis* — Princeton: Princeton University Press 1991 (XII + 247 p.) ISBN 0-691-06832-1 \$32.50

The old literate cultures have each sanctified a group of ancient texts to be their "classics," a complete, hallowed, and consistent storehouse of wisdom. The later born are assumed to lack the saintliness, acumen, and closeness to the origins of culture to write such texts; they may at best exert themselves to understand them, and to explain them to their times.

During the last decade comparative studies have come out that have elaborated on the common features of these "classics" like H. Coward, *Sacred Word and Sacred Text: Scripture in World Religion* [1988], and F. Denny and R. Taylor (eds.), *The Holy Book in Comparative Perspective* [1985]. The

stress on the "Urtext" in these works neglects the fact that the meaning and import of these texts had to be and was constantly mediated and renegotiated with a changing cultural, social, and mental environment through commentaries, a class of writings both amply used for philological information and loathed as an object of study by scholars of "classics."

Mr. Henderson's book sets out to fill this lacuna through a comparative study of the common assumptions shared by commentaries to the classics across cultures, as well as of the common strategies they used to solve the problems arising from the confrontation of these assumptions with the fairly unruly "classical" texts.

Their common assumption concerning the consistency of their "classics" will thus call forth, in different cultures, similar strategies to deal with the fact that the respective "classics" abound with statements that seem mutually exclusive—or downright trivial. In this endeavour, which is a first and daring step into uncharted territory, the author has wisely taken advice not only from the many studies that deal with the interpretation of texts like the Bible, the Veda, Homer, the Qur'an or the Confucian classics but also from the works of such scholars as Kermode, Frye, Todorov and Ricoeur who deal with more general questions of interpretation.

The actual similarities in both commentatorial assumptions and strategies listed by Mr. Henderson amply justify his comparative enterprise. They sharpen the eye of the student of a particular tradition for commentary strategies that arise out of the structural constellation in which the commentator works with regard to the text rather than out of a specific cultural context. This in turns helps to define the particularity of the cultural environment of his text.

Mr. Henderson's field is Chinese studies. Given the parochialism often prevailing in this field which is burdened with a plethora of material and an often elusive and difficult medium of communication the author's bold venture is to be greatly applauded. For the more westward cultures [including Maya culture], he has relied on many excellent studies contributed by specialized scholars. He tried to circumvent the inherent dangers of streamlining their information to fit his own arguments by including a number of translations of such commentaries into his reading list so that the other scholars' arguments are not entirely without context.

In the field of Chinese studies, very little work has been done on commentaries and their strategies. Mr. Henderson focusses here on the "Confucian" classics and their "Neo-Confucian" commentaries from the 11th through 13th centuries. His claim that the Neo-Confucian commentaries form "the most important and highly developed tradition in the history

of Confucian thought" is not too well substantiated; in volume, sophistication and influence the Han commentators as well as their 3rd cent. critics might easily be a match and even a precondition for Zhu Xi and the others who reinvented Confucianism during the Song-period. The very full agenda of the book in fact precludes a detailed treatment of any specific commentarial tradition or individual commentary. Mr. Henderson's sources for China are mostly not the commentaries themselves, but prefaces, topical essays and other matter by commentators who use these forms to state their intentions. These, however, might have a complex relationship to their actual work. Thus the particularity and timeliness of the Chinese commentaries remains diffuse as the author liberally quotes for each of the sections intrinsically interesting statements from different times and philosophical schools. We find the commentaries joining a *philosophia perennis* spanning both time and space.

Much of Chinese philosophy is written, as Mr. Henderson rightly remarks, in the form of commentaries. But these are written against the background of other commentaries that handled the same texts with other presumptions and strategies. A reading of the commentaries not so much as timeless options of reading, but has historical and often polemical products would have made the cross-cultural comparison more difficult, but perhaps also more rewarding. The few studies dealing with the intellectual history of Chinese commentary strategies like Yü Ying-shih's "Han Jin zhi ji shi zhixin zijue yu xin sichao [The new consciousness and new trends of thinking among scholars during the transition from Han to Jin]", *Xinya xuebao* 1959, or Hakodate's work on 3rd century commentators have not been used.

Through the specific and comparative analysis of different Chinese commentaries to the same text and entirely new question would have arisen that Mr. Henderson's study, all its merits notwithstanding, does not address: Is there a text? How does it, if at all, impose itself on the commentator? The peculiar features of a number of the Chinese classics, like the embedding of their logical links and grammatical structure into largely silent and forgotten rhetorical devices as well as the prevalence of implied subjects for the sentences allows for a shocking variety of legitimate and different readings of the same wording. Translations of the "classical" texts extrapolated from different commentaries in fact differ to such an extent that without the Chinese text a reader would be hard put to recognize that he is dealing with the same original. The Chinese commentaries thus offer the perhaps most rarefied material for the study of the irksome question whether there is authenticity to tradition or whether the commentary in fact writes the main text, which might only exist in these different commentarial manifestations.

Mr. Henderson's study is a useful, within its limits well-documented, supplement to the comparative study of the "scriptures" and hopefully a first step towards the study of the texts of the commentaries themselves.

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BRUCE LINCOLN, *Death, War, and Sacrifice. Studies in Ideology and Practice*.
 Foreword by Wendy Doniger—Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press 1991 (xxi + 289 p.) ISBN 0 226 48200 6 pbk. £14.25.

To the student of the history of religion Bruce Lincoln should be known for his stimulating analyses of myths and rituals in different societies and historical contexts. Judged by the material, his new book deals with Indo-European religion. Taking a closer look at it, however, method, not contents, forms the binding link between the twenty-one chapters: the analysis of myths and rituals within the horizon of material conditions, social conflicts, and patterns of legitimization of the society performing or transmitting these practices.

Most of the twenty-one chapters consist of articles published in the 1980s, they are collected in three different parts. After an introductory chapter on Indo-European religion, the first part deals with different mythologems concerning death and the nether world (chs. 2-8). Ultimately, the reconstruction of an IE basic myth, however, is abandoned (ch. 9). The criteria for a positive or negative afterlife could not be reduced to one "original" criterion: Myth is defined "as an authoritative mode of narrative discourse that may be instrumental in the ongoing construction of social borders and hierarchies" and as such it "is often a site of contestation between groups and individuals whose differing versions of social ideals and reality are inscribed within the rival versions of the myths they recount" (p. 123). This is converging with a general scepticism towards the existence of a historical Proto-Indo-European society, a scepticism that makes a lot of observations in earlier chapters obsolete. The second part (chs. 10-18) is rather heterogenous, some of the articles are very specialized. "War" figures in chs. 10-12 only; the only chapter of general interest (11) has been previously published in Eliade's *Encyclopedia of Religion*. Chs. 13-18 deal with sacrifice in a way similar to Lincoln's understanding of myth. As a particular trait of IE sacrifices the

correspondence of cosmic and social interpretations is demonstrated in Celtic or Scythian rituals. Science, as shown for middle Persian physiological texts, may work out the same correlations (chs. 17-18). The third part, aptly titled "Polemic pieces", deals with history of science and idéology criticism and addresses George Dumézil in particular. Dumézil's *idéologie trifonctionale* and the king's position within the *société tripartite* is shown to closely correlate with right-wing political associations and their model for an integrated corporative society. Ultimately, even the interpretations of single myths show traits of this preoccupation—something that must be taken into account when using Dumézil's results.

Like all of Lincoln's publications, these chapters are *discours de la méthode* and should be read as such. I am not sure, however, if it was very useful to put them together into a book. Many articles are interesting to the student of Indo-European religions only (which should have been indicated in a subtitle) and most of them are published in standard journals. To grasp the idea, it would suffice to read a few of them. To serve as a scientific biography of Lincoln (which, I hope, is too early, anyway) they should have been arranged in chronological order, and not within three rather diverging parts.

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LAURI HONKO (Ed.), *Religion, Myth, and Folklore in the World's Epics. The Kalevala and its Predecessors.* (Religion and Society 30, General Editors: Luther Martin, Jacques Waardenburg). Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter 1990 (XI, 587 p.) ISBN 0-89925-625-2 DM 238.—

This book contains a collection of papers presented at the conference at Turku on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Kalevala in 1985. The organization of the book is ambiguous. On the one side the editor seems to aim at a general study of the world's epics as indicated by the title *Religion, Myth, and Folklore in the Worlds Epics*. On the other side he intends to pay tribute to the importance of the Kalevala as indicated by the subtitle *The Kalevala and its Predecessors*. Potential contributors were presented with a list of general themes that could be discussed, and this resulted in twenty-seven essays by twenty-five authors discussing the Kalevala and other epics. According to the editor (22) the material fell 'naturally' into three categories: Models, Result, and Points of comparison: Europe, Africa, and Asia. He states that the "the main emphasis was on general comparative research (22) but comparison is not made in a systematic way, and a common theoretical approach is lacking.

The first part deals with those epics which were known to Lönnrot, the second part contains Finnish contributions discussing the *Kalevala*, and the third part contains all other papers. In the first section we find discussions of the Homeric epics, the *Aeneid*, the Norse traditions from Iceland, the *Nibelungenlied*, and Macpherson's *Ossian*. Interesting as these papers may be, they do not constitute a coherent section.

The second part, in many respects the best part of the book, contains interesting papers on the *Kalevala* by Kuusi, Kaukonen, Honko, and Alboniemi on the *Kalevala*.

The third part contains a wide range of papers which are more or less relevant to the study of the *Kalevala* (six papers on Europe, three papers on Africa, and six papers on Asia). It is unfortunate that the epic traditions of non-literate peoples receive little attention, since the problems of collecting and editing these traditions are particularly relevant to the study of the *Kalevala*.

The *Kalevala* constitutes the central focus of the book and most comparisons are made with reference to the *Kalevala*. Yet, the epic is exceptional in many ways. Most epics were either written for the first time by the participants themselves, or recorded by Western scholars, as in the case of the *Sunjata* epic. In the process of translation, recording, and selection of a version a scholar can exercise considerable influence on the form of the epic. But in the case of the *Kalevala* the epic is to a large extent a creation of the scholar himself. He did not only record oral traditions but organized them and shaped them into a great epic. He was not only guided by academic, but also by ideological and political considerations. Consequently the *Kalevala* reflects traditional folk traditions as well as 19th century ideology. Several essays deal with these problems and try to assess the role played by Lönnrot in the editing of this epic tradition (notably the papers by Kuusi, Kaukonen, and Honko). The relationship between folk tradition and the editor constitutes one of the central problems in the contributions about the *Kalevala*. Much more attention is paid to the intellectual background and the ideological notions of Lönnrot than to the ethnographic context of the epic traditions. This is also apparent in the discussions on the orality literacy debate, where the works of Lévi-Strauss, Jack Goody, and Walther Ong receive no attention at all.

The concept of the epic is problematic. Several authors (Honku, Kuusi a.o.) discuss its meaning. Of Greek origin, the word traditionally referred to Indo-European traditions. Only later it was accepted that epic traditions could also be found in Africa and America. Indo-European epics deal chiefly with the relations between the king and his retinue, notably the king and his most valiant hero. These traditions have to be placed in

the specific social and political organisation of Indo-European societies, since they reflect fundamental ideas and values of these cultures. Most Indo-European epics are preserved in versions which long preceded the development of the nationalistic ideologies of the 18th and 19th century which determined Lönnrot's outlook. Finno-Ugrian traditions deal with different problems and were collected at a later stage. To understand the nature of these traditions as well as the problems they are dealing with we have to compare the epics in these traditions before we turn to comparisons with epics stemming from completely different cultural traditions. In this respect the papers by Laugaste and Domokos are particularly interesting. Another useful approach is provided by a comparison of different traditions in the same area as is done in the paper of Oinas.

With regard to comparison the authors follow different theoretical approaches. Thus Bynum explains "the sameness of an underlying physiology in the two traditions" (the Väinämöinen poems and the Serbo-Croatian epic) by qualifying oral narrative tradition as a "kind of 'universal' language of great communicative power to those who will learn to read it in the way that ultimately it must be read, a way that reaches well beyond the mere natural languages in which it is everywhere expressed" (340). Heissig takes a more prudent stand when he attributes similarities between Mongolian epics and the *Kalevala* not only to the "norm-bound nature of heroic poetry", but also to the great migrations of the peoples of Eurasia a millennium ago (467).

Time and again the need for a theoretical framework of comparison comes to the fore. What is the theoretical relevance of a comparison of Vergil's *Aeneid* with the *Kalevala*, as in Oksala's paper? A comparison of Lönnrot with Homer or Vergil can not yield many results without a satisfactory theory of comparison. These problems become even more acute in the comparison of the *Kalevala* with African or Chinese epics.

Another problem is constituted by the comparison of the cultural context. An epic is part of a larger tradition. Various epical traditions may be connected and the audience is always aware of the wider context of an epic. An epic has to be examined in the context of a mythology, a cosmology or an ideology, which derive its significance from a changing ethnographic context. In an interesting paper on the Homeric epics and Greek cultural identity, Jensen points to the importance of that particular relationship. Yet, the relationship between the epic and the ethnographic context is seldom examined systematically. Thus the position of the singers, the status of the epics, and the organisation of the audience might have received more attention. Once we accept that each epic has to be understood in terms of its cultural context, the comparison of these contexts raises theoretical and methodical problems.

The book contains many contributions of a high quality, and it testifies to the growing interest in the study of epics. Considering the size and the price of the book it would have been worthwhile to relate and compare the conclusions of the various authors with each other [cf. Kaukonen's (176) statement that "the *Kalevala* is an epic born of poetry and should chiefly be interpreted as an allegorical work" and Oinas' (295) view that "The Finnish epic is essentially mythical and shamanistic"]. The book covers a wide area, but more attention should have been paid to the variety of theoretical approaches presented in the book as well as to the problems of comparison in the study of the world's epics.

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STEFANIE W. JAMISON, *The Ravenous Hyenas and the Wounded Sun. Myth and Ritual in Ancient India*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press 1991 (XIX + 335 p.) ISBN 0 8014 2433 X cloth \$52.00.

This book is the third in the series *Myth and Poetics* which aims at integrating literary criticism with the approaches of anthropology and pays special attention to problems concerning the nexus of ritual and myth. It is devoted to two myths in ancient Vedic literature: Indra and the Yatis (part I, 45-130) and Svarbhānu and the Wounded Sun (part II, 133-304). In her Introduction (1-41) to these two parts the author gives a short survey of the various literary materials and of the Vedic religion for non-Vedicists.

Vedic literature abounds in tantalizing mythic fragments which are often beyond understanding, as too little explanatory material has been preserved. Sometimes, however, an illumination, or even an explanation, is possible by meticulously looking for verbal echoes, thematic parallels and ritual encodings. The author has tried to reconstruct the two above-mentioned myths and to explain them in connection with their ritual contexts by recreating imaginatively the shared culture of the narrator(s) and the audience. As such, they are case-studies in which Jamison extensively and repeatedly tries to demonstrate the interpenetration of myth and position as represented by e.g. F. Staal.

The structure of the two parts is in the main line the same. Jamison starts with the presentation and translation of the relevant texts. Then she goes on with a careful analysis of all participants mentioned in the myths. She investigates the relations between the myths and their specific position

in various ritual contexts. These relations are further illuminated by lexicographical studies. In this way the author tries to show the implicit and explicit meanings of these two myths with their many obscure details.

The story of Indra who fed the Yatis to the hyenas (*sālāvṛkeyas*) forms a minor part of the Indra cycle and has long been ill-understood. According to Jamison, the 'recent' interpretations by Bodewitz and Dange are also unsatisfactory or even fanciful. In her opinion the Yatis are not the enemies or the victims of Indra, but ritual priests. They are given up to death on account of their ritual flaws, which make them vulnerable to the hyenas. It is Indra transformed into a female hyena who hands over the Yatis as food for her young cubs. From this point of view, the Yatis fulfil by their death certain ritual objectives as 'victims'. According to the myth, they are transformed into certain plants when they are killed. These plants are employed as sacrificial materials that bring rain. When Indra gives the Yatis to a pack of ravenous beasts he is not committing a callous act of violence, but is acting benevolently toward both these ritual priests and the hyenas and furthering both cosmos (macrocosmos) and ritual (microcosmos). Thus the myth of Indra, the Yatis, and the *Sālāvṛkeyas* seems to represent a model Vedic sacrifice; it can be reckoned among Indra's beneficial cosmogonic activities.

The myth of Svarbhānu and the wounded sun is frequently related in various Vedic texts, in full or in part; RV. 5.40.5-9 gives a relatively extensive account of it. The three major participants are Svarbhānu, the Sun and the seer Atri, and the two major actions, the wounding (*vyadh-*) of the sun by Svarbhānu and the rescue of the sun by Atri at the request of the gods. The central act of the myth is nearly always mentioned in its initial sentence: Svarbhānu Asura pierced/wounded the Sun with darkness. Jamison rejects the theory that Svarbhānu would be an eclipse demon, similar to Rāhu. The abundant and often cryptic material requires a more exhaustive explanation. She focuses on its different parts and details, on each of the participants and their actions in turn, and tries to find verbal and thematic clues. When dealing with the material she starts with the solution, the healing of the sun, and its thematic constituents. In this context she perceives a connection between the Svarbhānu myth and the theme of skin-diseases and their cures. She introduces the story of the maiden Apālā who suffers of a skin-disease as a parallel.

With the help of verbal clues she identifies another thematic complex, that of successful and unsuccessful birth. Then she focuses on the seer Atri and his place in the myth. After all these digressions she comes to the central questions: who is Svarbhānu and for what reason did he wound the Sun?

Jameson's answer is: the sun, Sūrya, committed an incestuous rape on his daughter, Dawn. On behalf of the gods, Agni in his fierce aspect as Rudra and bearing the punning epithet Svarbhānu (possessing the light of the sun) Asura, punished the Sun for his violation of law and custom. The Sun was 'pierced with darkness' by Agni's sharp flames that left holes burnt on the sun's surface (relation with skin-diseases), and he was covered over by darkness, that is the swirling clouds of Agni's smoke. Then the gods decided to heal the sun, because he did not shine forth anymore; as such he threatened the continuity of the cosmos. The gods removed the darkness with the help of Atri. This healing is done in two ways, each of which connects the myth with other mythic complexes, viz. that of skin-diseases and that of miscarriages.

In her careful study concerning these two enigmatic myths Jamison has connected the various seemingly unrelated threads in a brilliant way. As such she deserves appraisal. This does not imply that all her interpretations are equally convincing: the sunspots, e.g., as a phenomenon in the physical world hardly are an explanation for the cosmical crisis of the sun. Jameson's interpretation of Sūrya's sin as incest with his daughter seems probable, but she does not explain the meaning of this event within a broader context; or to say it otherwise, what is, for instance, the difference between the incest of Heaven with his daughter Uṣas, and Sūrya's with his daughter Uṣas? Nonetheless, this detailed study is a valuable contribution to the study of Vedic culture.

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OBITUARY

JOSEPH MITSUO KITAGAWA (1915-1992)

Joseph M. Kitagawa, former Dean and Professor Emeritus in the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, died on October 7, 1992, of pneumonia due to complications from a stroke suffered in January, 1992. His wife, Evelyn, and his daughter, Anne Rose Kitagawa (herself now a budding scholar of Japanese art history) were with him throughout his final illness. Though he had become Emeritus in 1985, he continued to be productive right up until the end, consulting with students and colleagues (sometimes even from a hospital bed) and publishing numerous articles and several books, including *Religious Studies*, *Theological Studies* and the *University Divinity School* (1991), and *The Christian Tradition: Beyond its European Captivity* (1992).

Kitagawa was born in Osaka, Japan, on March 8, 1915, and received his B.A. from Rikkyo University, Tokyo, in 1937. He came to the United States in 1941 to study in California, but when the U.S. entered World War II, he was interned for three and one-half years in American detention camps for people of Japanese ancestry. He received his B.D. from Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, Evanson, Illinois, in 1947 and his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1951, where he studied the history of religions with Joachim Wach. He joined the University of Chicago faculty in 1951, and became a United States citizen in 1955. After Wach had died and Mircea Eliade joined the faculty in 1957, Kitagawa and Eliade, together with Charles H. Long, founded the journal *History of Religions* in 1960.

Kitagawa served as Dean of the Divinity School from 1970 to 1980. He was one of the founding members of the American Society for the Study of Religion, and served as its President from 1969-72; he was Vice-President of the International Association for the History of Religions, 1975-1985, and served on numerous other academic councils. He received honorary degrees from Virginia Theological Seminary and Rikkyo University. Among his in-

fluential publications are *Religion in Japanese History* (1965) and the volume that he edited with Mircea Eliade, *History of Religions: Essays in Methodology* (1959).

Joseph Kitagawa had the unique ability to see very far and very near at the same time, to balance his enterprises for the development of the international discipline of the history of religions with his abiding concern for his students and colleagues as individuals. His detailed and affectionate knowledge of the personal lives and quirks of everyone in the field, from the highest to the lowest, became proverbial. After his retirement, his filial devotion to Joachim Wach inspired him to undertake the great labor of editing, translating, and publishing Wach's papers before he published his own final works. Certainly the field of the history of religions would not be as strong and rich as it is today were it not for Joseph Mitsuo Kitagawa, and it is left poorer by his death. He will be missed by many, many students, friends, and colleagues (not mutually exclusive categories) around the world.

University of Chicago WENDY DONIGER AND GARY L. EBERSOLE

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“ZEN IS NOT BUDDHISM”
RECENT JAPANESE CRITIQUES OF BUDDHA-NATURE*

PAUL L. SWANSON

Summary

Hongaku shisō, the idea that all beings are “inherently” enlightened, is an almost universal assumption in the Japanese Buddhist tradition. This idea also played an important role in the indigenization of Buddhism in Japan and in the development of the syncretistic religious ethos that underlies Japanese society. Through most of Japanese history, the idea of the inherent enlightenment (including non-sentient beings suchs as plants and rocks—which expanded to include assumptions such as the non-differentiation between “indigenous” kami and the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, and the transcendence of all dualities (including good and evil) as an ideal—was pervasive and unquestioned in much of Japanese religious activity and thought. Recently some Japanese Buddhist scholars, notably Hakamaya Noriaki and Matsumoto Shirō of the Sōtō Zen sect Komazawa University, have questioned the legitimacy of this ethos, claiming that it is antithetical to basic Buddhist ideas such as *anātman* (“no-self”), and that it is the source of many social problems in Japan. They call for a conscious recognition and rejection of this ethos, and a return to “true Buddhism.” After presenting a brief outline of the history and significance of these ideas in Japan, Hakamaya and Matsumoto’s critique is explained and examined. Some of the academic and social reactions to this critique are also explored.

Early in A.D. 817, Saichō, the founder of Japanese Tendai Buddhism, entered into a debate with Tokuitsu over the idea of Buddha-nature and universal enlightenment. Tokuitsu, a Hossō monk who lived in the Kantō region, had written a tract called *Bussōshō* [On buddha-nature], and Saichō responded with *Hokke kowaku* [Vanquishing misunderstandings about the *Lotus Sūtra*]. For the next four years these two scholars exchanged essays and arguments in what grew to be one of the most important doctrinal debates in Japanese Buddhist history. In short, Saichō championed the idea of universal buddhahood, the *ekayāna* ideal espoused in the *Lotus Sūtra* that all beings are destined for the highest enlightenment of a Buddha, while Tokuitsu supported the Yogācāra interpretation of five *gotra*, or five inherent potentials latent in sentient beings, including that of the *icchantika* who have no hope of ever attaining buddhahood.¹

What, you might ask, does this debate have to do with the contemporary study of religion and our understanding of Buddhism in Japan? Just this: we are in the midst of a very provocative “rethinking” of Japanese Buddhism by some prominent Buddhist scholars and thinkers who claim that Ch’an/Zen, the *tathāgata-garbhā* (“womb of the Buddha”) tradition, *hongaku shisō* (“original” or “inherent” enlightenment), and related ideas are “not Buddhism.” This is tantamount to saying that most, if not all, of Japanese Buddhism is not Buddhism at all. In a sense what they are saying is not at all that new—the *tathāgata-garbhā* tradition and Buddha-nature ideas have always been open to the charge that they posit an un-Buddhist substantialist or ātman-like existence, and it is akin to the debate between Saichō and Tokuitsu in our contemporary context. What is the “true” understanding of the teaching of the Buddha? Which of the many and varied strands (if any) of Buddhist tradition should be accepted as correct and proper, and which (if any) should be rejected as contrary to the Buddha-Dharma? What are the wider social implications of accepting or rejecting certain interpretations of the Buddhist tradition?

It is usually assumed that Saichō “won” the debate against Tokuitsu, and certainly Saichō’s stand of universal buddhahood became the accepted presupposition for most of Japanese Buddhism, and is in fact the dominant religious ethos in Japan. *Hongaku shisō*—a way of thinking that came to include such ideas as the inherent enlightenment of all things (including non-sentient beings such as grasses and trees, rocks and mountains); the identity of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa; no differentiation between the “indigenous” kami and the Buddhas and bodhisattvas; the transcendence of all dualities, including good and evil—grew to be pervasive and unquestioned in much of Japanese religious activity and thought. However, there have also been times, though few and far between, when the idea and implications of *hongaku shisō* were questioned. Now is such a time.

The current attack is led by two Buddhist scholars at Komazawa University (associated with the Sōtō Zen sect): Hakamaya Noriaki and Matsumoto Shirō. The main focus of their attack is the *hongaku shisō* tradition—strictly speaking the idea that all things are “inherently” or “originally” enlightened—and the implications of

this kind of thinking (such as the ideal of *wa*, “harmony” or “conformity”) that is pervasive in Japanese society. In this paper I will briefly examine the development of this tradition in Japan, its significance for Japanese religion and society, and the recent critique of this tradition by Hakamaya, Matsumoto, and other Japanese scholars.

History of Hongaku Shisō

The term *hongaku* [Chin. *pen-chiao*] has no Sanskrit equivalent, and makes its first appearance in the *Awakening of Faith*, a text probably compiled in China,² and in two Chinese apocryphal Buddhist texts, the *Jen-wang ching* [T 8.825-834, 834-845]³ and the **Vajrasamādhi-sūtra* [T 9.365-373].⁴ In the *Awakening of Faith*, *hongaku* is used in contrast to *shigaku*, the “inception” or “actualization” of enlightenment, i.e. the process by which one realizes enlightenment in his life; thus the English rendering “original” enlightenment. The *Awakening of Faith* teaches that

... “original enlightenment” indicates [the essence of Mind (*a priori*)] in contradistinction to [the essence of Mind in] the process of actualization of enlightenment; the process of actualization of enlightenment is none other than [the process of integrating] the identity with the original enlightenment.⁵

This idea of original or inherent enlightenment, along with the *Awakening of Faith* in general, had a great influence on the development of East Asian Buddhism.⁶ Some brief examples: Fa-tsang (643-712), the Hua-yen patriarch, is also well known for his influential commentary on the *Awakening of Faith*;⁷ the idea was pervasive in the Ch'an tradition; and it influenced the development of the concept of “the Buddha-nature in non-sentient beings” in the T'ien-t'ai tradition.

In Japan *hongaku* thought took on a life of its own. Its influence was felt in the Shingon school, particularly through Kūkai's extensive use of the *Shakumakaen-ron* [T # 1668, 32.591-668], an apocryphal commentary on the *Awakening of Faith* attributed to Nāgārjuna. The development of *hongaku shisō* was especially prominent in the Tendai school. After the Tendai school was transmitted to Japan by Saichō it underwent many developments,⁸ one of which

was the growth of an identifiably independent branch called *hongakumon*. Texts devoted to *hongaku shisō* made their appearance in the late Heian and Kamakura periods and some were attributed to prominent Tendai figures such as Saichō, Genshin, and Ryōgen. These texts include the *Honri taikō shū*, attributed to Saichō, which interprets the most important Tendai teachings in terms of *hongaku shisō*; *Hymns on Inherent Enlightenment [Hongaku-san]*, with commentary attributed to Ryōgen [*Chū-hongaku-san*] and Genshin [*Hongaku-san shaku*], and texts such as the *Shuzen-ji ketsu*, attributed in part to Saichō, which contain details on the oral transmissions (*kuden*) of *hongaku* ideas, practices, and lineages.⁹ Such oral transmissions and the accompanying lineages were an important part of the *hongaku* tradition.

It is no accident that these developments were contemporaneous with (even part of) the growth of the syncretistic *honji-suijaku/shinbutsu shūgō* movement, the tendency to emphasize the unity of Buddhist and “Shinto” deities and practices. Its influence can be seen in the development of Shugendō (the way of mountain asceticism), in Shinto, and in all of the Buddhist schools. Building on the Mahāyāna idea of the “identity of samsāra and nirvāṇa,” *hongaku shisō* developed into an ethos (to use Tamura Yoshiro’s words) of “absolute non-duality” and “total affirmation” of the mundane world. The ideal is perhaps best expressed in the phrases *sōmoku kokudo shikkai jōbutsu* and *sansen sōmoku shikkai jōbutsu* [the grasses, trees, mountains and rivers all attain buddhahood], phrases which pop up almost incessantly in Japanese literature, art, theatre, and so forth.¹⁰ This religious ethos was the overwhelming status quo for most of Japanese history, and continues to dominate today despite the attempt by the State to forcibly “separate” Buddhism and Shinto elements (*shinbutsu bunri*) in the early Meiji period.

There have been a few exceptions to the dominance of the *hongaku* ethos. Noteworthy is the work of Hōchibō Shōshin in the 12th century,¹¹ Shōshin was critical of *hongaku shisō*, saying that one should not understand it to mean that sentient beings are “already” enlightened, and that such an interpretation denies causality and is the heresy of “naturalism” (*shizen gedō*).¹² It is often pointed out that the so-called “new” Kamakura Buddhist schools arose in reaction against the *hongaku* stance of the Tendai establish-

ment, but I think that in actual practice these movements soon “reverted to” (if they had ever rejected) what Hakamaya and Matsumoto criticize as a *hongaku* ethos. In the Tokugawa period Myōyū (1637-1690) and Reikū (1652-1739) of the Anraku school urged a revival of the keeping of the precepts based on the *Ssu-fen lü* [Jpn. *Shibun-ritsu*] in response to what they perceived as a decadence encouraged by *hongaku shisō*. This movement was exceptional, however, and the *hongaku* ethos continues as an unquestioned assumption for much, if not all, of Japanese Buddhism.

Recent Critiques of Hongaku Shisō

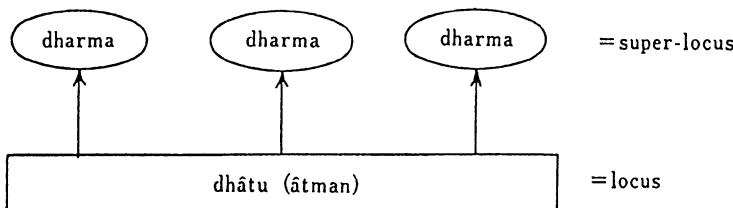
The current controversy concerning *hongaku shisō* centers around two figures associated with Komazawa University, Matsumoto Shirō and Hakamaya Noriaki, but includes a number of others. It is significant that these figures are all first-rate textual scholars and philosophers, as well as faculty members of the Sōtō-Zen-affiliated Komazawa University. Theirs are not casual criticism made by outsiders or sloppy scholarship based on lack of familiarity with the Buddhist tradition and its texts. These are first-rate academic studies prepared by committed Buddhists.

Matsumoto Shirō, a specialist in Māhyamika Buddhism, published a collection of his essays in 1989 called *Engi to kū—nyoraizō shisō hihan* [Causality (*pratītya-samutpāda*) and emptiness (*śūnyatā*)—A critique of *tathāgata-garbhā* thought]. I will attempt to summarize the main points Matsumoto makes in these essays.

- I. The first essay, provocatively titled “*Tathāgata-garbhā* thought is not Buddhism” [*Nyoraizō shisō wa bukkyō ni arazu*] leaves no doubt as to Matsumoto’s position or intent. *Tathāgata-garbhā* thought is not Buddhism—then what is the correct teaching of the Buddha? Buddhism is the teaching of non-self [*muga*; *anātman*], the teaching of causality [*pratītya-samutpāda*]. This teaching of causality is not the teaching of universal mutual co-arising and non-temporal causality developed later (e.g. by Hua-yen thinkers), but the temporal, twelvefold chain of dependent arising as discovered by the Buddha during his enlightenment under the Bodhi tree and classically expressed in the *Mahāvagga*.¹³ The critical point is a denial of any

eternal, substantial, underlying basis or locus on which everything else depends or arises from. This “locus” that is denied by the teaching of causality is given the name “dhātu,” and any teaching that implies the existence of a dhātu is called “dhātu-vāda,” a neo-Sanskritism coined by Matsumoto. Dhātu-vāda is antithetical to Buddhism, since it is the very teaching that Śākyamuni intended to deny. The idea of a *tathāgata-garbha*, the “womb,” “matrix,” or “seed” of buddhahood inherent in all sentient beings, is a form of dhātu-vāda and thus is not Buddhism.

Dhātu-vāda is further explained using a chart:



The “locus” (L) is the underlying basis, and the “super-locus” (S) are the phenomenal “dharmas” which arise based on the locus. The teaching of dhātu-vāda follows a certain pattern:

1. L is the basis for S;
2. L gives rise to [is the source of] S;
3. L is one, S are many;
4. L is real (existent), and S are not real (non-existent);
5. L is the essential nature (*honshitsu*; ātman) of S;
6. S is not ultimately real, but “participates” in reality as something that arises based on L.

The teaching of dhātu-vāda appears to be a teaching of “equality” (*byōdō shisō*)—after all, it says that all things are based on a single, universal, eternal reality. However, in practice it leads to discrimination (*sabetsu shisō*), because if one assumes a single basis and underlying reality for all things—that good and evil, strong and weak, rich and poor, right and wrong, are fundamentally “the same”—there is no need or incentive to correct any injustice or right any wrong. In practice, then, dhātu-vāda supports and fosters discrimination and injustice. The idea of a universal,

inherent buddhahood appears optimistic, but in fact enhances the status quo and inhibits improving the human condition.

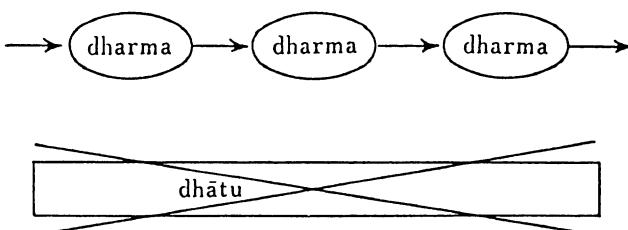
The article closes (p. 8) with a summary conclusion in three parts:

1. *Tathāgata-garba* thought is a form of dhātu-vāda.
2. Dhātu-vāda is the object of Śākyamuni's criticism, and the correct Buddhist teaching of causality (*pratītya-samutpāda*) is a denial of dhātu-vāda.
3. Contemporary Japanese Buddhism can only claim to be truly Buddhist insofar as it denies the validity of *tathāgata-garba* thought.

II. The second essay, “On *pratītya-samutpāda*,” as well as the rest of Matsumoto’s work, expands and gives detailed support to the basic assertions outlined in the first essay. Here Matsumoto critiques the work of many of the most prominent modern Japanese Buddhist scholars, such as Ui Hakuju, Watsuji Tetsurō, Hirakawa Akira, Tamaki Kōshirō, Fujita Kōtatsu, and Tsuda Shin’ichi.

Some of the more interesting points made in this long essay:

There is no religion without time. The correct understanding of causality is not that of theoretical, spatial, or mutually inclusive causality, but a temporal causality of an effect following after a cause. The twelve-linked chain of causation refers not to the relationship between things, but the temporal sequence from cause to effect. In terms of the locus/super-locus scheme, *pratītya-samutpāda* is a sequence of super-locus without a locus; a sequence of properties and not things (dharmas). There is no reality (dhātu) beyond or underlying this temporal sequence. [pp. 14-36] This understanding of *pratītya-samutpāda* can be schematized as follows:



The concept of *hongaku* (Matsumoto uses the English “original enlightenment”) posits “pre-time” or state beyond time from which all things arise, or in or on which all things are simultaneously and mutually related. This is dhātu-vāda. [pp. 65-77]

In a note (# 11, pp. 79-81) Matsumoto says that the dhātu-vāda way of thinking can be found in all ancient societies regardless of East or West. It is the idea that “all things arise from and return to One.” If so, then it is possible to say that *Tathāgata-garba* thought/dhātu-vāda is the theoretical/philosophical development of “native” (*dochaku*—dare I say “primitive”) animistic ideas and “folk religion” (*minzoku shūkyō*).¹⁴ Some claim that the idea of *sansen sōmoku shikkai jōbutsu* is the climactic development of Buddhist thought, but it is only a form of animism. There is no period in history where animism has been held in higher esteem than today. Recently at a conference in Japan, a certain scholar claimed that “The basis of the religious consciousness of the Japanese people is animism and ancestor veneration.” This kind of understanding of folk religion and *tathāgata-garba* thought is closely related. Both are the theoretical development of “native” (*dochaku*) ways of thinking and its most representative exponent is the Nihongaku (“Japanism”) of Umehara Takeshi. It is not at all surprising that Umehara is a proponent of both Japanese folk religion and *tathāgata-garba* thought.

III. This last theme is taken up in the third essay, *Bukkyō to shingi—han-nihonshugiteki kōsatsu* [Buddhism and the kami—thoughts against “Japanism”]. Here Matsumoto criticizes the kind of easy “Japanism” and pro-Japan glorification represented by the Nihongaku of Umehara Takeshi. He first introduces the ideas of Umehara, who often speaks of the superiority of the Japanese race, and who presents Japanese Buddhism positively in terms of its *tathāgata-garba* elements, the “buddahood” of inanimate things, and the emphasis on *wa*.¹⁵ He points out that ideas such as “no thought and no conceptualization” (*munen musō*), “direct intuition” (*chokkan*), and “non-reliance on words” (*furyū monji*), that have been introduced in the West as representative of “Zen,” are in fact ideas based on *tathāgata-garba* and *hongaku* thought, and should not be considered positive Buddhist virtues.

The “Japanism” of Motoori Norinaga, Kawabata Yasunari, and Mishima Yukio are then briefly outlined, showing their close identification of themselves with the country or concept of “Japan.” He concludes that such thinking is a “philosophy of death” (*shi no tetsugaku*) and as a Buddhist he must reject all philosophies of death.

He concludes (p. 111):

The idea that the ancient Japanese people had an optimistic attitude toward life and this became pessimistic due to the introduction of Buddhism is a lot of rubbish put forth by people who know nothing about religion. In fact, the ancient Japanese people had no basis for living with hope. They lived their lives in this world knowing only that they must wait in fear for their inevitable death, and that after death they were faced with the feared land of darkness (*yomi no kuni*). It was only through their encounter with Buddhism that they were given hope, or in other words, given the conviction of life (resurrection) after death.

Finally, allow me to share some of my thought with regard to my personal relationship with Japan. I believe that to love Japan is to love one's self. To me “Japan” is an extension of my own mind and body. As I love my own body, so I love Japan. Self-love—narcissism—is very enticing and sweet.... However, love is something which should be directed to others; if it is directed at one's self, it becomes self-attachment.

On the basis of the Buddhist teaching of non-self (*muga-setsu*), I have come to the following conclusions:

1. One should disdain oneself; and
2. One should love only the absolute other (God or Buddha).

Therefore, as a Buddhist, based on the teaching of non-self, I must not love Japan since it is an extension of my self.

Even if I believe I should not love myself, it is certainly true that I am always loving myself; even if I believe I should not love Japan, I cannot avoid loving Japan. However, the teaching of the Buddha is absolute.... A Buddhist must not love Japan [i.e. one's own country].

IV. The fourth essay, *Jitsuzairon hihan* [A critique of “existence”], deals with Tsuda Shin'ichi's criticisms of Matsumoto's arguments made in chapter 2 (which had been published as an article earlier). Matsumoto makes a detailed, technical, and textual argument (pp. 121-190) against understanding “dharma” as “existence,” and expands on his critique of dhātu-vāda.

V. In *Gedatsu to nehan—kono hi-bukkyōteki naru mono* [Liberation (*vimukti*) and nirvāṇa—Some non-Buddhist ideas] Matsumoto goes even further in his critique to say that

the final goal of Buddhism is said to be “liberation” (*gedatsu; vimukti*). However, in the effort to correctly understand Buddhism there is no greater

misunderstanding. The reason is that the idea of liberation (*vimukti*) is based on the non-Buddhist idea that there is a self (*ātmavāda*) [to be liberated], and is therefore an anti-Buddhist idea. Not only liberation, but also the ideas of *nirvāṇa*, a concentrated state of mind (*jhāna, samādhi*), and even the idea of a mind (*citta*), are all based on the non-Buddhist idea of a self. [p. 191]

In this essay Matsumoto leaves aside the ideas of *jhāna, samādhi*, and *citta* and concentrates on liberation and *nirvāṇa*.

In short, he argues that the idea of liberation and *nirvāṇa* presupposes a “self” to be liberated, and is thus a dhātu-vāda. He argues against the prevalent interpretation of *nirvāṇa* as “extinction”—based on the etymology of *nir√vā*, to “blow out”—and instead argues for the etymology of *nir√vṛ*, to “uncover.” Matsumoto gives a painstaking textual study to support his contention, and concludes with four points (pp. 195-219):

1. The original meaning of “*nirvāṇa*” was not “extinction” but “to uncover.”
2. The basic idea of “*nirvāṇa*” is “the liberation of the ātman from that which is not ātman,” and is thus related to the idea of “liberation” as the goal of Buddhism. Thus both ideas of “*nirvāṇa*” and “liberation” are based on the idea of an ātman.
3. The ātman is often compared to “light,” or it is said that the ātman gives forth light. If one uncovers or takes away that which is hindering the light, then the light can shine forth and illuminate the darkness. Thus the “extinction of light” cannot be the meaning of a liberation or “*nirvāṇa*” of an ātman.
4. “The liberation of the ātman from that which is not ātman” is, in other words, the liberation of the “spirit” from the “body.” Thus, complete liberation is possible only by completely escaping the body, and therefore this kind of liberation thought is a “philosophy of death.”

We have yet to see how far Matsumoto is willing to go in denying or reinterpreting traditional Buddhist terms and concepts. As we shall see later, Takasaki Jikidō takes Matsumoto to task for going too far and leaving nothing that can be called “Buddhist.”

VI. The next essay on *Hannaya-kyō to nyoraizō shisō* [The Prajñā-pāramitā Sūtras and *tathāgata-garbha* thought] shows that although

the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras began [with the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñā-pāramitā*] as writings based on the idea of emptiness (*śūnyatā*), dhātu-vāda-type ideas gradually crept in and one must be careful to discriminate the contents of the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras texts.

One of the main arguments here is that the earliest extant version of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñā-pāramitā*, the Chinese translation made in 179 A.D. (*Dōgyō-hannya-kyō*, T #224, 8.425-478), does not contain the famous passage that the “mind is originally pure” [*prakṛtiś cittasya prabhāsvarā*], a passage used to support *tathāgata-garbha*-like ideas.

Matsumoto concludes that the early Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras taught emptiness, but gradually incorporated *tathāgata-garbha* tendencies, finally resulting in the compilation of the *Abhisamayālamkāra*, an influential commentary on the *Larger Prajñā-pāramitā Sūtra* that embraces *tathāgata-garbha* ideas. Matsumoto advocates studying early versions of the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras, such as the *Dōgyō-hannya-kyō*, to help weed out these later (and mistaken) accretions.

VII. The next essay on *Shōmangyō no ichijō shisō ni tsuite* [On the *ekayāna* idea in the *Śrīmālādevī Sūtra*] is an early essay by Matsumoto, the arguments of which are better developed in other essays. By examining the *tathāgata-garbha* ideas in the *Śrīmālādevī Sūtra* Matsumoto concludes that

Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism is usually considered to have had two major scholastic traditions: the Mādhyamika and Yogācāra. This is fine for classifying the *scholastic* (*gakuha*) traditions, and I cannot agree with the opinion that the *tathāgata-garbha* tradition was a third school. In India there were certainly scholastic debates within the Yogācāra school, and debates within the Mādhyamika school, and there were also debates between the Yogācāra and Mādhyamika schools, but can it be said that there were debates between the *tathāgata-garbha* and the Yogācāra schools? [No, I don’t think so.]

VIII. The final essay, *Kū ni tsuite* [On emptiness], discusses *śūnyatā* from the perspective of *pratītya-samutpāda*. Matsumoto argues that the main theme of Nāgārjuna’s *Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā* is not emptiness but *pratītya-samutpāda*. He does not claim that *śūnyatā* and *pratītya-samutpāda* are opposing or contradictory concepts, but does caution that *śūnyatā* must be understood in terms of *pratītya-*

samutpāda, and not the other way around. Otherwise there is the danger that *śūnyatā* will be misunderstood in dhātu-vāda terms.

Finally, Matsumoto has developed a wider social critique in a paper he gave in 1990 in Vancouver on the meaning of the *Lotus Sūtra* in Japanese culture. In this paper he makes a general critique of Japanese culture based on the ideas outlined above.

This optimistic philosophy of “Japanese identity” exhibits the following characteristics:

- a) An adoration of naturalism rather than humanism.
- b) A praise of experiential anti-rationalism (e.g. mysticism of Zen or tantric Buddhism) over logic and intellect.
- c) A praise of totalitarianism over individualism, which in turn paves the way to corporate nationalism, in a forced application of *wa* or “harmony.”
- d) A praise of animism and polytheism or pantheism, on the basis of relativism, over absolute monotheism.¹⁶

As Matsumoto points out many times in his book, Hakamaya Noriaki is his colleague and confidante, and their thinking has developed in tandem. Let us now take a look at the critique of *hongaku shisō* published by Hakamaya.

The Critique of Hongaku Shisō by Hakamaya Noriaki

Hakamaya Noriaki, also a faculty member of the Buddhist Studies department of Komazawa University, is a noted specialist in Yogācāra. He is a prolific writer, scholar, and social critic with a long list of textual studies to his credit, and has recently published two collections of his essays on the subject at hand: *Hongaku shisō hihan* [A critique of *hongaku shisō*] and *Hihan bukyō* [Critical Buddhism].

In his preface to *Hongaku shisō hihan* Hakamaya clearly spells out his intent: to show that *hongaku shisō* is not Buddhism. In addition, he claims that Zen, the Kyoto school of philosophy, even the teaching of non-duality in the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, are not Buddhism. And as a specialist in Yogācāra, he hopes eventually to write an article about the idea that Yogācāra is not Buddhism!

By *hongaku shisō* Hakamaya means a way of thinking that all things are embraced in a basic, singular, ineffable reality (a state of “original enlightenment”) that functions as an authoritarian ideology that does not admit the validity either of words or concepts

or faith or intellect. The structure of reality is expressed as consisting of a “pure” basis (object)—expressed as “original enlightenment,” the basis, essence, or principle—and the (subject) which is based on this reality—expressed as “actualized enlightenment”, traces, function, or phenomena. This “basis”—no matter how it is expressed—is a dhātu, and anything that admits a dhātu is not Buddhism.

What, then, is Buddhism? In a substantial introduction Hakamaya, like Matsumoto, lays out three defining characteristics of Buddhism as a rule by which to measure what is and what is not Buddhism (pp. 9-10):

1. The basic teaching of the Buddha is the law of causation (*pratītya-samutpāda*), formulated in response to the Indian philosophy of a substantial ātman. Any idea that implies an underlying substance (a “topos”; *basho*) and any philosophy that accepts a “topos” is called a “dhātu-vāda.” Examples of dhātu-vāda are the ātman concept in India, the idea of “nature” (*shizen*) in Chinese philosophy, and the “inherent enlightenment” idea in Japan. These ideas run contrary to the basic Buddhist idea of causation.
2. The moral imperative of Buddhism is to act selflessly (*anātman*) to benefit others. Any religion that favors the self to the neglect of others contradicts the Buddhist ideal. The *hongaku shisō* idea that “grasses, trees, mountains, and rivers have all attained buddhahood; that sentient and non-sentient beings are all endowed with the way of the Buddha” (or, in Hakamaya’s words, “included in the substance of Buddha”) leaves no room for this moral imperative.
3. Buddhism requires faith, words, and the use of the intellect (wisdom, *prajñā*) to choose the truth of *pratītya-samutpāda*. The Zen allergy to the use of words is more native Chinese than Buddhist, and the ineffability of “thusness” (*shinnyo*) claimed in *hongaku shisō* leaves no room for words or faith.

The paradigm for these three characteristics, Hakamaya insists, is to be found in the thought and enlightenment experience of the Buddha himself. Śākyamuni realized (Hakamaya prefers the word “chose”) the truth of causation during his enlightenment

(Hakamaya prefers “thinking”) under the Bodhi tree, resisted the temptation to keep the truth and bliss of enlightenment to himself and instead shared it for the benefit of others, and preached about his discovery of the truth of causation with words, appealing to people’s intellect as well as their faith.

This pattern is also found in T’ien-t’ai Chih-i’s critique of Taoism (p. 13). From the standpoint of Buddhism Chih-i rejected his country’s native philosophy—one of the few to do so—because it does not recognize causality (*inga*), it lacks the ideal of benefiting others (*rita*), and it tends towards a denial of words (*zetugon*).

Limits of time and space do not allow us to even briefly summarize each of Hakamaya’s essays, so I will just mention most of them and then concentrate on a few representative and recent essays.

I. Hongaku shisō hihan, 1989

1. *Kūshō rikai no mondaiten* [Some problems in understanding *śūnyatā*]
-on various uses and interpretations of *śūnyatā* in Buddhist texts and the importance of words (*logos, vāc*)
2. *Daijōkishin-ron ni kansuru hihanteki oboegaki* [Some critical notes on the *Awakening of Faith*]
-a critique of the concepts of thusness (*shinnyo, tathatā*) and “mind” in the *Awakening of Faith*
3. *Engi to shinnyo* [*pratītya-samutpāda* and *tathatā*]
-an important study included in the commemorative volume of essays in honor of Hirakawa Akira; a warning against understanding *pratītya-samutpāda* in terms of *tathatā* or “réalité”
4. *Norinaga no bukkyō hihan zatsukō* [Miscellaneous thoughts on Motoori Norinaga’s critique of Buddhism]
5. *Sabetsu jishō o umidashita shisōteki haikei ni kansuru shiken* [Some personal opinions on the way of thinking that gave rise to discrimination]
-on the role of *hongaku shisō* in encouraging and maintaining discrimination against outcastes in Japanese society
6. *Norinaga no ryōbu shintō hihan—Shisō to gengo no mondai ni kan-*

- shite* [Motoori Norinaga’s critique of Ryōbu Shinto—On the question of the relationship between thought and words]
-on Norinaga’s criticism against *hongaku* influence in Ryōbu Shinto, and the importance of words (i.e., they are not just “the finger pointing at the moon”)
7. *Shie (catus-pratisaraṇa) hihankō josetsu* [Introductory critical thoughts on the “four criteria” (of the Buddhist tradition)]
-a warning against accepting the criteria that people should depend (1) on the Dharma but not on people, (2) on the meaning but not the words (of the teachings), (3) on the “definitive meaning” but not on the “interpretable meaning”, and (4) on wisdom but not on consciousness
8. *Bukkyō to jingi—Han-Nihongakuteki kōsatsu* [Buddhism and the kami—Thoughts against Japanism]
9. *Yuimagyō hihan* [A critique of the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*]
-on the idea that the teaching of non-duality in the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* is not Buddhism.
10. *Hōshōron ni okeru shin no kōzō hihan* [A critique of the structure of faith in the *Ratnagotravibhāga*]
11. *Basho (topos) to shite no shinnyō*—“*Basho no tetsugaku*” *hihan* [*Tathatā* as topos—A critique of the philosophy of “place”]
-a critique of “topical philosophy” [*basho no tetsugaku*] in contrast to “critical philosophy” [*hihan no tetsugaku*]
12. *Dōgen rikai no ketteiteki shiten* [The definitive perspective for understanding Dōgen]
-that despite the understanding of most of the interpreters of his philosophy, Dōgen should be understood as being critical of *hongaku shisō*
13. *Bendōwa no yomikata* [How to read (Dōgen’s) *Bendōwa*]
14. *Jūnikan-bon Shōbōgenzō senjutsusetsu saikō* [A re-examination of the theories concerning the compilation of the *Shōbōgenzō* in twelve fascicles]
-that the twelve-fascicle compilation of the *Shōbōgenzō* was written by Dōgen late in his life and was critical of *hongaku shisō*¹⁷
15. *Sankyō itchi hihan shōkō* [Some minor thoughts critical of the “unity of the three teachings” (Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism)]

- that Buddhism should not accept the fuzzy and mistakenly tolerant idea that these three religious traditions are “fundamentally compatible”
- 16. *Dōgen ni taisuru “zenichi no buppō”-tekirikai no hihan* [A critique of understanding Dōgen in terms of the “complete unity of the Buddha Dharma”]
 - a response to comments by his colleague Ishii Shūdō and a critique of the interpretation of Dōgen based on the theory of one (*ichi*) and all (*zen*)
- 17. *Kyōge betsuden to kyōzen ittchi—Zen no yūgōshugi hihan* [The “transmission outside the teachings” and the unity of teachings and meditation (*zen*)—A critique of Zen syncretism]
 - (the title says it all)
- 18. *Dōgen no hitei shita mono* [That which Dōgen denied]
 - that in his later years Dōgen rejected the fuzzy spirituality based on *hongaku shisō*
- 19. *Nananjū-go-kan bon “Hotsu mujōshin” to Jūni-kan bon “Hotsu bodaishin”* [The “arousing the supreme mind” chapter in the 75-kan *Shōbōgenzō* and the “arousing *bodhicitta*” chapter in the 12-kan *Shōbōgenzō*]
 - that both of these essays deal with the same subject but come to completely different conclusions, thus showing that Dōgen’s thought changed from the former to the latter.

II. Hihan Bukkyō [Critical Buddhism], 1990

1. *Hihan bukkyō josetsu*—“*hihan no tetsugaku*” tai “*basho no tetsugaku*” [Introduction to critical Buddhism—“Critical philosophy” vs. “topical philosophy”]
 - In short, to be a Buddhist is to be critical, i.e., to be able to make distinctions; the only truly Buddhist stand is to be critical; Buddhism must be a “critical philosophy” able to make distinctions, not a “topical (*basho*) philosophy” [e.g. *hongaku shisō*] that is “all-inclusive” and uncritically tolerant, an “experimental” philosophy.

2. *Kyōtogakuha hihan* [A critique of the Kyōto school of philosophy]
-a critique of the idea of *basho* in the Kyoto school [Nishida Kitarō and Nishitani Keiji] and that it is an extension of the non-Buddhist ideas of *hongaku shisō*
3. *Hihan to shite no gakumon* [Scholarship as critique]
-on the importance of a critical method for scholarship; that what is wrong should be pointed out as wrong and not papered over for the sake of a shallow harmonious tolerance [This may seem rather standard and not worth saying for Western scholarship, but is a radical stance in the world of Japanese scholarship. In contrast, perhaps the Western world of scholarship needs some of the tolerance and graciousness of Japanese scholarship.]
4. *Kobayashi Hideo “Watashi no jinseikan” hihan* [A critique of Kobayashi Hideo’s *My View of Life*]
5. *Amerika bukkyō jijō bekken—Amerika no aru wakaki bukkyō kenkyūsha no happyō ni mukete* [A glance at the state of Buddhism in the United States—On a paper given by a young Buddhist scholar]
-A report on his experience at the U.S.-Japan Conference on Japanese Buddhism held at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, August 25-28, 1985: in particular the paper by Paul Griffiths, “On the Possible Future of the Buddhist-Christian Interaction”¹⁸
6. *Shinnyo, hokkai, hosshō* [*Tathatā, dharmadhatu, dharmata*]
-on the non-Buddhist implications of these concepts
7. *“Wa” no han-bukkyō-sei to bukkyō no han-sen-sei* [The anti-Buddhist character of *wa* and the anti-violent character of Buddhism]
-the idea of *wa* is not a positive Buddhist virtue but in practice is an excuse for uncritical syncretism and plays into the hands of the powerful in coercing conformity from above; true Buddhist virtue is anti-violent, and requires a critical stance against discrimination and injustice; “faith” should be the ideal, not *wa*.
8. *Gi-bukkyō o haisuru* [Rejection of false Buddhism]

- the importance of choosing what is right and rejecting what is wrong
- 9. *Watsuji-hakase ni okeru “hō” to “kū” rikai no mondaiten* [Problems in Dr. Watsuji Tetsurō's understanding of “dharma” and “emptiness”]
- 10. *Nyojitsu chiken*—“*Shi ni itaru yamai*” o yominagara [Thoughts on “truth” while reading *A Sickness Unto Death*]
- 11. *Yuishiki to muga—Boku no shikan taza* [Vijñāpti-mātra and anātman—My “just sitting”]

III. Some essays published recently:

- 1. *Shōtoku Taishi no wa no shisō hihan* [A critique of Shōtoku Taishi's idea of *wa* (“harmony”)] [1989/10]
-a continuation of essay II-7
- 2. *Tennōsei hihan* [A critique of the emperor system] [1989/10]
-on the dangers of the Japanese emperor system and its similarity to the *hongaku shisō* ethos
- 3. *Zenshū hihan* [A critique of the Zen school] [1990/3]
-a call for the “Zen” tradition to reject non-Buddhist ideas such as *hongaku shisō* and Taoist influences, and recover the “true Dharma”
- 4. “*Hokkekyō*” to *hongaku shisō* [The *Lotus Sūtra* and *hongaku shisō*] [1990/10]
-on the differences between the *ekayāna* teaching of the *Lotus Sūtra* and *hongaku shisō*
- 5. *Shizen hihan to shite no bukkyō* [Buddhism as critical of the idea of “nature”] [1990/10]
-Buddhism does not teach “oneness with nature” but rejects the ātman-like idea of an all-encompassing “nature” (*shizen*); a Buddhist must escape from “nature” and project “nature” from destruction by becoming the “masters and possessors of nature” [*maitres et possesseurs de la Nature*].

Many of the points Hakamaya makes in his more technical “Buddhological” essays have already been mentioned in summarizing Matsumoto's work. Thus I will concentrate on Hakamaya's social commentary, and some of his recent essays:

1. “*Wa*” no *han-bukkyō-sei* to *bukkyō* no *han-sei* [The anti-Buddhist character of *wa* and the anti-violence character of Buddhism] [1987]

This essay opens with a long quote on the increasing interest in religion in Japan, the cooperation between state and religion, and how this is a good thing for the country. Except for the dated style, one gets the impression that the quote was written recently, given the fact that Japan is now experiencing another *shūkyō būmu*. The perspective shifts, however, when one realizes that the quote is by Nishitani Keiji, written in 1941 as Japan was in the throes of a world war, religious persecution, and domestic repression. Hakamaya uses this quote as a springboard to argue that the idea of *wa* (“harmony”) is promoted as a positive ideal, but in reality it is a coercive principle used by the powerful to maintain the status quo and social order, and to restrict criticism. The *wa* promoted since the time of Shōtoku Taishi and his famous 17-article Constitution is not a Buddhist virtue. *Wa* is an enemy of Buddhism and an enemy of true peace. Buddhists should not give in to a compromising and mushy “tolerance” that uncritically accepts all things as “equal.”

Coeval with the ideal of *wa* is the *hongaku shisō* religious ethos. Both support an attitude of uncritical tolerance, which Hakamaya compares to mixing *miso* and *kuso* [brown bean paste and dung—“curds and turds”] (p. 110). Both support a superficial syncretism that ignores differences of right and wrong or good and bad, and thus ironically works to maintain discrimination and injustice and the whims of those in positions of power and authority.

In contrast to *wa*, the Buddhist should emphasize faith. The *wa* ideal encourages acceptance of any teaching or idea, whether it is Confucian, Toaist, native Japanese animism, or un-Buddhistic *dhātu-vāda* tendencies; “faith” requires one to have a firm belief in certain Buddhist truths and to reject ideas that are contrary to these truths. Thus Buddhist faith (*shin*, *śraddhā*) is the same as the Latin *credo*—one believes in order to be able to judge whether an idea is correct or not correct. This is “faith” as taught in the *Lotus Sūtra*. The “faith” taught in *tathāgata-garbha* texts such as the *Ratnagotravibhāga* and *Awakening of Faith*, in contrast, emphasizes the unity of the believer and the object of belief, and confidence in one’s own

buddha-nature or potential to become a buddha (see essay I-10). The faith of the *Lotus Sūtra* means to believe the words of the Buddha, and then judge with one's intelligent (*prajñā*) between the correct and the incorrect, and criticize the incorrect with words.

The *wa* ethos led people in prewar Japan to uncritically sacrifice their bodies to the war effort and maintain silence. Buddhist faith requires intellect to critically respond with words and actions against mistaken notions and activity. This is the “anti-violent” stand of Buddhism. To oppose *wa* is to be truly anti-violent and anti-war (*hansen*).

2. *Tennōsei hihan* [A critique of the emperor system] [1989/10]

This essay opens with a quote from Dōgen:

Sentient beings should not be full of fear and take refuge in the mountain deities, oni, kami, and so forth, or take refuge in non-Buddhist (*gedō*) spiritual powers (*caitya*). There is no liberation from suffering by relying on such things. By following the mistaken teaching (*jakyō*) of non-Buddhist ways, ... one does not attain any causes for liberation. The wise person does not praise these things; they add to suffering and not to good recompense. Thus one should not take refuge in mistaken ways, but should clearly exclude them.

Hakamaya takes the occasion of Emperor Shōwa's death, and the period of “voluntary restraint” (*jishuku*) among the Japanese people during the Emperor's terminal illness, to comment on the place and dangerous tendencies of the emperor system in modern Japan. He wonders how it can be claimed that Japan is a country “with unusual freedom of thought and expression” when social pressures during this period were so strong that hardly anyone dared to make any comment or take any action that could be construed as “inappropriate” to the occasion.

The emperor system is like the *hongaku* and *honji suijaku* ethos—it is structured with an ineffable center and a murky syncretism and relies on the ideal of *wa* to muffle any ideological criticism. It is a non-Buddhist system of spirituality that Dōgen clearly rejected. Buddhists must be critical of the emperor system and its hothouse atmosphere that stifles dissent.

3. *Zenshū hihan* [A critique of the Zen school] [1990/3]

In this article Hakamaya reiterates and expands his criticism that “Zen is not Buddhism,” makes a blistering attack on the Zen inter-

pretations of Yanagida Seizan and D.T. Suzuki, and also responds to some questions raised by his colleague Ishii Shūdō.

One passage in particular clarifies the intent of Hakamaya's critique:

I have said that “Zen is not Buddhism” but do not recall ever saying that “Chinese Ch'an is not Buddhism.” This difference may appear to be minor, but it is an important distinction. The reason is that anything which shows no attempt at “critical philosophy” based on intellect (*prajñā*), but merely an experiential “Zen” (*dhyāna, bsam gtan*), whether it be in India or Tibet or wherever, cannot be Buddhism. (p. 64)

Hakamaya's harsh critique of Yanigida Seizan and D.T. Suzuki is based on the idea that if, on the one hand the correct Dharma (*saddharma*) of Buddhism is a critical philosophy and a foreign and imported way of thinking, and on the other hand Zen is a topical philosophy no different from the customs and ways of the culture in which it is imported, then the fact both Suzuki and Yanagida wrote books concerning two phenomena that should be understood in opposition to each other, namely “Buddhism” and “Japanese culture,” shows that they are not aware of the fundamental opposition between these two. According to Hakamaya, the triumph of Zen in China and Japan is the triumph of the indigenous (*dochaku*) ways in absorbing Buddhism into itself and neutering the critical thrust of the Buddha's teaching.

In concluding this essay and in response to questions from Ishii, Hakamaya clarifies his position on some points, including:

- there is no “good” *hongaku shisō*—no parts of it can be admitted as Buddhism, and it can only be rejected;
- as Ishii points out, the correct Dharma (*saddharma*) recognizes both sitting in mediation and various religious rituals as valuable, and also recognizes a proper role for a teacher to guide one in the correct Dharma. However, Hakamaya points out, one must completely reject the authoritarian idea that a teacher is absolute and never mistaken.

4. “*Hokkekyō*” to *hongaku shisō* [The *Lotus Sūtra* and *hongaku shisō*] [1990/10]

This paper was prepared to deliver in English at the conference on the *Lotus Sūtra* and Japanese Culture at the University of British

Columbia in Vancouver, Canada, in August 1990. It therefore repeats and neatly summarizes many of Hakamaya's major points. He points out that the *Lotus Sūtra* (*Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra*), since it claims to proclaim the only right and true Buddhism, and is an imported way of thinking, should be understood as antithetical to the indigenous ways of thinking in the countries it enters. *Hongaku shisō*, on the other hand, is naturally amenable to indigenous ways of thinking. Thus these two standpoints should, at least theoretically, be in opposition.

It has already been shown that *hongaku shisō* is a dhātu-vāda." The three criteria for a "correct" Buddhism are that it teaches causality, it promotes an altruistic, other-benefitting ideal, and words are valued to express the truth. The *Lotus Sūtra* meets all these criteria.

The *Lotus Sūtra* is a "critical philosophy," in contrast to the "topical philosophy" of *hongaku shisō*. It urges people to have faith, is critical of mistaken understanding of the Buddha Dharma, and values the skillful use (*hōben, upāya*) of language.

Unfortunately, Hakamaya says, the *Lotus Sūtra* has been understood in an un-Buddhistic way for most of Japanese history. The interpretations of Seng-chao, Chi-tsang, and others, who understood the *Lotus Sūtra* in terms of Taoist or Buddha-nature ideas, were imported into Japan from the earliest days, influenced the *wa* ethos attributed to Shōtoku Taishi, and from the very beginning turned the critical *Lotus Sūtra* approach into an overly tolerant ethos. Thus from the very beginning the *hongaku shisō* attitude won out over the radical, critical, and truly Buddhist approach of the *Lotus Sūtra*.

Response and Other Contributions to the Issue

Although Matsumoto and Hakamaya are the central figures in this on-going controversy, there are other scholars who have made similar claims or have contributed to this subject. The work of four more faculty members of Komazawa University should be mentioned, though once again limits of space and time do not allow a full treatment.

1. Ishii Shūdō has published an important volume on "Studies

in the history of Zen in the Sung period” (1989). In his introduction he refers to the work of Matsumoto and Hakamaya and their conclusion that “Chinese Zen is not Buddhism (anti-Upaniṣad).” He adds that “this may seem rather strange at first glance, but it corresponds to my understanding that ‘the indigenous Taoist thought is not Buddhism,’ and their statements promise to be valuable in my attempt to clarify the character of Chinese Ch’an” (p. ix). Ishii is careful not to give full support to the claims of Hakamaya and Matsumoto, however, and as we have seen from Hakamaya’s response to Ishii’s queries (in “Zenshū hihan”), they are in the midst of a public debate to clarify their positions. Ishii appears willing to admit the value of “indigenous” elements without them compromising Buddhism; Hakamaya will have none of it.

2. Yamauchi Shun’yū has published two massive tomes on “Dōgen-Zen and Tendai *hongaku shisō*” (1985) and “Zen and Tendai meditation” (1986). The former provides detailed studies on the development of *hongaku shisō*, and underscores Dōgen’s critique against it. In his preface he acknowledges that his studies are an extension of the work of Hazama Jikō (1923) and Tamura Yoshiro (1965, 1973) (see below).

3. Yoshizu Yoshihide has published studies on “Kegon-Zen” (1985) focussing on Fa-tsang, Ch’eng-kuan, and Ysung-mi, with special attention to the influence of *hongaku shisō*. He concludes that “although the thought of original awakening (*hongaku shisō*) is said to have taken root in Japanese Buddhism from the Heian period through the Kamakura period, further research must be conducted on the contact and incurring differences (sic?) between the Chinese meaning of original enlightenment, which I have called here Hua-yen-Ch’an, and the Japanese usage of the concept of original awakening” (p. 15).

4. Itō Takatoshi has published a number of works (1988, 1990) on the early Chinese assimilation of Buddhism. He focusses on the work of Seng-chao and his influence on Chi-tsang, the systematizer of the San-lun school. He points out that it is currently understood that these two figures were very influential in helping Buddhism take root in China. Itō, however, argues that in fact these two figures assimilated Buddhist teachings on the basis of indigenous Chinese ideas. In his essay on ‘matching terms,’ a phrase usually

used to describe only the early, pre-Seng-chao phase of the introduction of Buddhism into China, Itō argues that “All of Chinese Buddhism, from the time of its introduction to the dominance of the Ch’an school, is a Buddhism of ‘matching terms’” (p. 57). In other words, Chinese Buddhism is always understood on the basis of the indigenous ideas such as *tao* and *li*. A Buddhism of “matching terms” is no more than an extension of indigenous Chinese ideas (*rōsō shisō*), and cannot be considered correct or proper Buddhism.

Responses to the Challenge by Buddhist Scholars

1. The topic of *hongaku shisō* was brought to the fore of current Buddhist studies through the work of Tamura Yoshiro, who followed in the footsteps of Hazama Jikō and Shimaji Taitō in identifying *hongaku shisō* as a dominant ethos in Japanese Buddhism and religion in general. Tamura’s study on the influence of *hongaku shisō* on the new Kamakura Buddhist movements (1965) and the compilation of *hongaku* texts (TADA 1973) laid the foundation for current studies on *hongaku shisō*.

It was a great loss to the world of Buddhist scholarship when Tamura Yoshiro passed away in 1989. We can only speculate how he would have responded to the challenge presented by Matsumoto and Hakamaya. Tamura is on record as saying the *hongaku shisō* was the climactic development of Mahāyāna Buddhism, and was a tireless advocate of the positive influences of this ethos, not only on Japanese religion but in various areas of Japanese culture. What D.T. Suzuki claimed for “Zen,” Tamura would have claimed for *hongaku shisō*.¹⁹ His collected works on the subject, published in 1990, must serve as his “response” on the subject.

2. The greatest authority on *tathāgata-garbha* thought in Japan today is Takasaki Jikidō, and his masterful *Nyoraizō shisō no keisei* was published in 1974. Both Matsumoto and Hakamaya quote his work with respect, and in some of his recent publications Takasaki makes a preliminary response.²⁰ Takasaki praises them for their careful scholarship and critical approach, but cannot accept their conclusion that *tathāgata-garbha* thought and *hongaku shisō* is “not Buddhism.” He points out (1991, p. 206) that the *tathāgata-garbha*

texts themselves are constantly aware of the possible criticism that they are positing an ātman, and deny the charge. Their openness to this charge did not lead to them being accused in India of being “not Buddhism”. It is true that the Mādhyamika school criticized the *tathāgata-garbhā* and Yogācāra traditions of using expressions which implied substantial existence, but this was accepted as still being a part of Mahāyāna Buddhism, although an “incomplete” teaching. The *tathāgata-garbhā* ideas were accepted in Tibet also as part of the Mahāyāna tradition.

As for Matsumoto’s idea of dhātu-vāda, Takasaki adds, it is a useful proposition with which to criticize *tathāgata-garbhā* and Yogācāra ideas, and it is structurally similar to the Upaniśadic idea of the unity of Brahman and ātman. However, Takasaki doubts if it is necessarily and always un- or anti-Buddhist, and whether it can be a litmus test to determine what is and is not Buddhism. Takasaki finds Matsumoto’s defining characteristics of Buddhism too restrictive, and wonders if maybe Śākyamuni himself was “poisoned” by dhātu-vāda influences.

Matsumoto’s logic should lead him to criticize the Mādhyamika idea of “supreme truth” (*paramārtha-satya*), and eventually any and all aspects of the Buddhist tradition (1989, p. 373). Matsumoto admits that ultimately he can only rely on “an absolute Other,” and Takasaki wonders if Matsumoto will eventually embrace Christianity.

Hakamaya, Takasaki points out (1989, p. 373 ff.), attacks *tathāgata-garbhā* more as a social critic, and there is no denying that Buddhism has contributed to social injustice and discrimination. However, Takasaki claims, the fault for these shortcomings cannot be laid solely at the feet of *hongaku shisō*—a “pure” philosophy of emptiness could have led to the same results. In any case it is undeniable that a Buddhist should have compassionate concern for others and not ignore proper practices.

Hakamaya’s critique of languages also makes important points, and logical, verbal expressions are important in Buddhism, but Takasaki thinks that one must recognize the limits of language. It is not anti-Buddhist to admit these limits.

Takasaki concludes his brief comments by noting (1991, p. 212) that important questions have been raised by Matsumoto’s and

Hakamaya's critique, and it is time for him and others to rethink *tathāgata-garba* ideas and the *Awakening of Faith*, and for him to reconsider his work as presented in *Nyoraizō shisō keisei*.

3. Hirakawa Akira is one of the deans of Japanese Buddhist studies, and he responds to Matsumoto's work in the leading essay in a collection of articles he edited on “*tathāgata-garba* and the *Awakening of Faith*” (1990, pp. 78ff.). First he states his own understanding of *tathāgata-garba* as the “nature” or “potential” to attain buddhahood. It is not static but is ever-changing: this is the *tathāgata-garba-dhātu*. *Dhātu* does not necessarily mean a substantial “foundation” or “basis” as Matsumoto claims. In fact there are passages in the Āgama sūtras which identify *dhātu* with *pratītya-samutpāda*. The *Śrīmālādevī Sūtra* itself says that the *tathāgata-garba* is not an ātman (T 12.222b19-21). Hirakawa agrees with Matsumoto that *pratītya-samutpāda*, *śūnyatā* and *anātman* are the fundamental teachings of Buddhism, but cannot agree that therefore *tathāgata-garba* thought is not Buddhism.²¹

4. Lambert Schmithausen has published “Remarks on N. Hakamaya's view of the problem of ‘Buddhism and Nature’” (1991, pp. 53-62). He critiques Hakamaya's view of Buddhism and nature and concludes that, despite his epousal of a “genuine Buddhism,” some of his ideas are borrowed from the Western tradition and are “rather Cartesianism in a Buddhist garb” (1991, p. 62).

Responses Outside the World of Buddhist Scholarship

1. Response of the Sōtō Sect

I have no direct information on the response of the rank and file of those in the Sōtō sect, but one would assume that the criticism is not welcome. The daily routine of Sōtō temples, like most other Japanese Buddhist sects, mostly involves funerary rites.²² The *hongaku* ethos is as prevalent in Sōtō circles as in any other Buddhist school. What would be the reaction among church members in England if a first-rate scholar and theologian at a major seminary (or the University of Cambridge) claimed that the Church of England is “not Christian”?

2. *Hongaku shisō* and Japanese Feminism

One of the most interesting responses to the critique of *hongaku shisō* is by Japanese feminists, who have picked up on the theme and applied it to their critique of contemporary Japanese society. Ōgoshi Aiko, Minamoto Junko, and Yamashita Akiko have made quite a splash with a best-selling publication of their essays entitled *Sei-sabetsu suru Bukkyō* (1990, “Buddhism as a promotor of sexual discrimination”). They point out that so far the feminist movement in Japan has largely consisted in activities and analysis influenced by Western models, and that feminism must respond to the indigenous situation in order for it to take root and be meaningful for Japanese society. In this context they refer to Hakamaya’s critique of *hongaku shisō* and argue that this ethos has contributed greatly to sexual discrimination in Japan. They point out that the *wa* ethos puts the burden for staying at home and maintaining the “harmony” of family life on women, and this acts to inhibit the liberation of Japanese women from restrictive traditional roles, not to mention the unconscious effect of this ethos in all aspects of their daily life. Minamoto (1990) attacks *wa* as a repressive element of Japanism (*Nihonshugi*) and a discriminatory ethos based on *hongaku shisō* (p. 9-13). Surely no one familiar with the place of women in Japanese society can deny the validity of these claims.

Some Personal Observations

The question still remains whether or not all Buddha-nature formulations are necessarily *dhātu-vāda* and thus antithetical to Buddhism. One can come up with many examples of Buddha-nature formulations that take pains to avoid just that sort of substantialist interpretation. T’ien-t’ai Chih-i’s concept of threefold Buddha-nature (*san’in busshō*), for example, proposes a synergy of reality, wisdom, and practice that avoids proposing a substantial *dhātu*. Buddha-nature is threefold: Buddha-nature as the way things are (the “direct” cause of buddhahood), the wisdom that illuminates the way things are (the “sufficient” cause of buddhahood) and the practice that perfects inherent disposition for wisdom (the “conditional” causes of buddhahood). In order to avoid a simplistic treat-

ment of whether or not Buddha-nature “exists,” Chih-i interprets Buddha-nature in terms of the *ekayāna* principle of the *Lotus Sūtra*: the promise of potential buddhahood for all beings. Buddha-nature is thus not a static entity, and yet one cannot say that it does not “exist.” Everyone is not a Buddha “just as they are”—a process is required to manifest the inherent potential of buddhahood. Buddha-nature is part of a larger world of experience that involves three aspects: the way things are, the wisdom to perceive things correctly, and the practice required to attain this wisdom.²³

As for *hongaku shisō*, perhaps the difficulty in rendering this term in English reveals the tension and danger in the term itself. I have always been wary of the translation “original” enlightenment because it has too strong a temporal implication, and yet many of the interpretations of this term (and the *Awakening of Faith* itself) do indeed encourage this understanding (and provide good reason for Matsumoto and Hakamaya to reject it as dhātu-vāda). The terms “innate” and “inherent” enlightenment also smack of a substantialist heterodoxy. If indeed *hongaku shisō* (and universal Buddha-nature) is a valid expression of the Buddha Dharma, it is incumbent on the proponents of this kind of thinking to show how it is compatible with the basic Buddhist teachings of *anātman* (non-self) and *pratītya-samutpāda* (causality)²⁴ One could start by discussing why it was necessary to come up with a new term in Chinese instead of using the traditional term *tathāgata-garbhā*.

Finally, apart from the technical arguments as to whether Buddha-nature ideas and *hongaku shisō* are “orthodox” or “not really Buddhism,” it cannot be denied that this ethos has failed to provide a broad ethical dimension or stimulate a social ethic in Japanese society. Japanese Buddhists may—and in fact have—argued that this is not a problem, and that for Zen the priority is for the individual to realize one’s own enlightenment, after which compassion and concern for others should “flow forth spontaneously.” Nevertheless history has shown that this ethos tends to support the status quo; it provides neither a stimulus for necessary social change and altruistic activity, nor a basis to resist social structures that prey on the weak and oppressed. Was the Zen master who dismissed a beggar at the gate and refused him food and clothing, saying, “He has the Buddha-nature,” failing as a Bud-

dhist to be compassionate, or was he merely following through with the implications that flow naturally from the Buddha-nature ethos?

Concluding Summary

The criticisms of Hakamaya and Matsumoto seem to be directed at a number of different targets, often at the same time and not always readily apparent. At least three levels can be distinguished: Buddhological, sectarian, and social criticism.

- 1) At the Buddhological level Hakamaya and Matsumoto are questioning the consistency of concepts such as Buddha-nature and *hongaku shisō* with other basic Buddhist concepts such as *pratītya-samutpāda*. They use textual and doctrinal arguments in an attempt to show that Buddha-nature ideas (*dhātu-vāda*) are incompatible with other, more basic, Buddhist teachings. Whether or not one agrees with the specifics of their argument, the time is ripe for a Buddhological reevaluation of the Buddha-nature concept.
- 2) At a sectarian level they are resisting what they perceive as an incorrect understanding of Dōgen’s teachings by their own Sōtō sect, and seek to reform the sect by re-evaluating Dōgen’s teachings, especially with regard to the idea of Buddha-nature.
- 3) At the level of social criticism they intend to show that the acceptance of the Buddha-nature/*hongaku shisō* ethos in Japan has led to objectionable social conditions and attitudes, and that a recognition of the danger of this ethos is necessary to change such unfortunate social conditions. That such social criticism should arise at this time in Japanese society, and from such a source, is a matter of great significance not only to those interested in Buddhism and its development in East Asia and its potential meaning for the West, but also for those interested in the dynamics of religious ideas and their influence on society in general, both in the past and present.

In conclusion, it can be said that the favorable yet stereotyped description of Japanese Buddhism (even Japanese religion in

general) has it emphasizing harmony with nature and a “harmonious” society, absolute immanence, an uncritical acceptance of phenomena as they are, the interdependence or identity of kami and buddhas, love of peace, an affirming and positive attitude toward life in this world, and so on. And on the negative side it is said to be lacking impetus for social-ethical concerns; having a weak idea of justice and social injustice, and so allowing people to become easy prey to political propaganda and social pressures to conform; encouraging an irresponsible “hands-off” disposition that contributes to pollution, reckless use of natural resources, littering, and destruction of public property, and disregard for the interest of anyone outside of one’s own “group”; and providing no basis for making ethical judgements between right and wrong, good and bad, correct and incorrect. These may be no less an oversimplification of the Japanese religious ethos than attempts to characterize the world-wide environmental destruction of the last century as a result of the Biblical injunction in Genesis to “subdue the earth.” But it is just this ethos that Matsumoto and Hakamaya are challenging. What is the true understanding of the Buddha Dharma? What are the social implication of various interpretations of the Buddha Dharma? What is the role of Buddhism in Japanese society today? How should developments in Buddhist doctrinal history be understood? What were the social, political, and Japan of the uncritical acceptance of the idea of an inherent and universal buddha-nature? Can contemporary Japanese society be critiqued from a Buddhist perspective, and if so, how? These are the questions that need to be addressed, and are being addressed, by rethinking the meaning and significance of *hongaku shisō*.

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it is destined to be somewhat outdated by the time it appears in print. The latest developments (as of fall 1992) show that there is a growing scholarly debate brewing over the significance of Dōgen's 12-*kan* version of the *Shōbōgenzō*. Dōgen scholars in the West are invited to fill in and expand on my brief outline of this specific subject. The debate has also moved some major Japanese scholars to revise and/or update their work. Worthy of attention is a major publication called *Buddha kara Dōgen e* (From Buddha to Dōgen; Nara Yasuaki, ed., Tokyo: Tōkyō Shoseki, 1992), which grew out of a series of twelve colloquia held recently at Komazawa University.

¹ For details see Groner, *Saichō*, pp. 91-106.

² See the translation by Hakeda (1967); on the controversy over the origin of the *Awakening of Faith*, see recent works (and list of sources) by William Grosnick (e.g. “The Categories of *T'i*, *Hsiang*, and *Yung*: Evidence that Paramārtha Composed the *Awakening of Faith*,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 12/11 (1989): 65-92) and Whalen Lai (e.g. “A Clue to the Authorship of the *Awakening of Faith*: Śikṣānanda's Redaction of the Word ‘Nien’,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 3/1: 34-53; “The *Chan-ch'a ching*: Religion and Magic in Medieval China,” in Buswell, *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, 1990, pp. 175-206).

³ For details on the Chinese apocrypha and the *Jeng wang ching* see Swanson 1989, pp. 41-50, and Buswell, *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, 1990.

⁴ For details on this sūtra see Buswell, *The Formation of Chinese Ideology*, 1989.

⁵ See Hakeda, p. 37.

⁶ For details see the authoritative essay on the subject by Tamura Yoshiro, 1973, pp. 477-548, and other works by Tamura.

⁷ *Ta-ch'eng chi'i-hsin lun i-chi*, T # 1846.

⁸ For details see my introduction to the special issue on Tendai Buddhism in the *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 14/2-3, 1987; see also in the same issue the articles on “The Characteristics of Japanese Tendai” by Hazama Jikō and “Inherent Enlightenment and Saichō's Acceptance of the Bodhisattva Precepts” by Shirato Waka.

⁹ For details see Tamura 1973.

¹⁰ It is often assumed that these phrases are quotes from a Mahāyāna text, but in fact they are not [at least as far as I was able to determine—if someone can find these phrases in a classical Buddhist text, I'd like to know about it]. See Miyamoto Shōson, “‘Sōmoku kokudo shikkai jōbutsu’ no busshōronteki igi to sono sakusha,” *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū* 19/2, 1961, pp. 672-701. There are similar phrases, such as *issai shujō shitsu'u busshō* [all sentient beings have the Buddha-nature] in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, but such Mahāyāna texts do not go so far as to admit the implications of these two phrases that even non-sentient things have Buddha-nature. In fact, at least one passage in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* says exactly the opposite: “That which is without Buddha Nature is the ground, the trees, gravel, and rocks. That which is other than these nonsentient things is all called Buddha Nature” [T 12.581a22-23 & 828b26-27]. See Jamie Hubbard, “Absolute Delusion, Perfect Buddhahood—The Universal Buddha of the San-chieh-chiao,” in Griffiths and Keenan, ed., *Buddha Nature*, 1990.

¹¹ Shōshin is known for his voluminous commentaries on the major works of T'ien-t'ai Chih-i, the creative genius and founder of the T'ien-t'ai tradition; it is said that he was so involved in his studies that he was not aware of the contemporary struggle between the Taira and Minamoto families, equivalent to a German scholar in the 1940's being unaware of World War II.

¹² See Tamura 1984 and 1990, p. 393 ff.; Yamauchi (1985), pp. 718 ff.

¹³ For a translation of this exposition in the *Mahāvagga* see Warren, *Buddhism in Translations*, pp. 83-87.

¹⁴ Matsumoto takes pains to point out that he is not using the term “native” in a derogatory sense.

¹⁵ I will return to the theme of *wa* later.

¹⁶ From a copy of the paper delivered by Matsumoto at the conference on the Lotus Sūtra and Japanese Culture at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada, August 1990.

¹⁷ Since this paper was prepared Hakamaya has published another book, specifically on this topic. See Hakamaya 1992.

¹⁸ See Minoru Kiyota, ed., 1987.

¹⁹ And Hakamaya would say that they are both the same *dhātu-vāda*, and neither are Buddhism.

²⁰ Matsumoto (p. 147) points out that Takasaki gave a paper entitled *Iwayuru Dhātuvāda ni tsuite* [On so-called *dhātuvāda*] at the Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Gakkai in 1988, but this paper did not appear in the *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū* which published the proceedings of this conference, and I have not been able to get a copy of his remarks.

Both books (1989, 1990) were under preparation long before the appearance of Matsumoto and Hakamaya’s critique, so Takasaki’s response is contained in remarks appended at the end of the books.

²¹ It should be noted that Hirakawa’s essay was written in response to Matsumoto’s early article on the *Śrīmālādevī Sūtra*, and does not take into account his later developments on the theme.

²² See Ian Reader’s articles on “Zazenless Zen” (1986) and “Transformations and Changes in the Teachings of the Sōtō Zen Buddhist Sect” (1985).

²³ See my article on “T’ien-t’ai Chih-i’s Concept of Threefold Buddha-nature: A Synergy of Reality, Wisdom, and Practice” in Griffiths and Keenan, ed. *Buddha Nature*, 1990.

²⁴ An important step in this direction is made by Sallie King in her recent book *Buddha Nature* (1991).

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PROPHETS, SEERS, AND POLITICS IN GREECE, ISRAEL, AND EARLY MODERN EUROPE

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Summary

After a short introduction on the study of the history of religions at Groningen, this paper analyses the relationship between prophets (seers) and political power. Concentrating on Greece, Israel and early modern Europe it poses three questions. First, do seers operate independently of political rulers? Secondly, does the influence of prophets change when the political structure changes? Thirdly, does the medium of prophecy remain constant or does it change over time?

In Greece, seers were closely connected with the political elite, especially the kings. As their main function was the legitimisation of choices, their public influence started to wane with the rise of democracy and public political debate. In Israel we can note the concomitant rise of the king and decline of the prophet, who remains only influential from the margin of society. At the same time, we can see the gradual disappearance of ecstasy among the prophets and the growing influence of writing. After the return from exile the growing importance of the Torah led to a gradual merger of prophets and priests. Finally, in early modern Europe prophecy flourished especially in the Protestant areas, but lost ground in the seventeenth century through the centralisation of power, the introduction of the printing press, and the changing intellectual climate.

In my conclusion I stress the importance of the *histoire événementielle* for the history of religions and ask for more interest in the religious history of Europe.

At the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, the serious study of the history of religions started in 1918, when Gerardus van der Leeuw (1890-1950) was appointed professor of the "History of religions in general and the history of the doctrine concerning God". It was especially his influential *Phänomenologie der Religion* (1933), which established and confirmed his international fame; in addition to the German edition, French and American translations are still available.¹

After his premature death Van der Leeuw was succeeded in 1952 by Theo van Baaren (1912-1989), artist, poet and scholar—perhaps even in this order. Van Baaren was more interested in gods than in God, and it was his influence which liberated history of religions from theology in Holland. His great interest in the iconography of

“primitive” religions led to the foundation of the Groningen Instituut voor Godsdiesthistorische Beelddocumentatie, the inauguration of the international series *Iconography of Religion* and the establishment of the ethnographic museum “Gerardus van der Leeuw”.²

In 1977 Hans Kippenberg (1939) came from Berlin. He first assisted Van Baaren as associate professor and succeeded him after the latter retired in 1980. Under Kippenberg’s guidance, interest in iconography was strengthened, resulting in the annual *Visible Religion* (1980-), and together with Huib Hubbleing (1925-1986), the late philosopher of religion,³ he developed the research program *Religious Symbols*, in which our Department of the History of Religions cooperates with scholars from the Faculties of Literature and Philosophy.⁴ As we are currently studying the problem of “Religion and social elites” I want to devote some consideration to a phenomenon that has not yet received the attention it deserves: prophets, seers and power.

Numerous societies know of prophets and seers—persons who receive or interpret divine messages and convey them to their surroundings.⁵ These messages are usually influential within the community and thus are connected with the exercise of power. This relation suggests a number of questions, three of which I want to discuss. First, what is the relation between prophets and the ruling political powers: do they operate independently or are they closely connected? Secondly, is the influence of prophets constant or does it change when the political structure changes? Thirdly, does the medium of prophecy remain identical through the ages or does it change in line with cultural developments. In elaborating these questions I will concentrate on ancient Greece, Israel and early modern Europe for reasons I will expound at the end of my lecture.

1. *Greece*

As my point of departure I take the oldest Greek literary work, Homer’s *Iliad* (ca. 800 B.C.). There are a number of seers in this epic about the famous Trojan War.⁶ When, for example, the Greeks before Troy wondered who had sent them the plague, Achilles advised them to consult a *mantis*, a seer.⁷ Such a religious

functionary was essential to military expeditions in those days: The Seven against Thebes marched under the guidance of the seer Amphiaraus, Jason and his Argonauts sailed out with the seer Mopsus, and Homer invented the seer Theoclymenus to assist Telemachus during the search for his father Odysseus.⁸

In response to Achilles' proposal there appeared Calchas, the son of Thestor. He was “by far the best of the ornithomancers, who knows the present, the future and the past, and who guided the ships of the Greeks to Troy through the mantic skill which Phoebus Apollo gave him” (I.69-72). Elsewhere in the *Iliad* Calchas is also active on the battlefield. When the Greek position deteriorated, Poseidon assumed the “shape and indefatigable voice” of Calchas in order to exhort the Greeks” (XIII.45).⁹ Calchus, thus, is the model of the archaic Greek seer *par excellence*: male, ornithomancer, “problem solver”, closely connected to a god, and prestigious warrior.¹⁰ Before we take a closer look at the social status of the seer, we will first briefly analyse these aspects.

Homeric society was dominated by male aristocrats, who greatly valued selfcontrol. In this society there was no room for influential prophetesses, let alone ecstatic women, such as the well known mythological figure of Cassandra, the Sibyl, the Delphic Pythia or the priestesses of the oracle of Dodona. In this respect it is significant that the Sibyl came from Erythrae in Asia Minor,¹¹ that Delphi and Dodona were situated in the geographical margin of the Greek world, and that Cassandra was a relatively late poetical creation not a reflection of an existing type of prophetess.¹²

Even though these women operated in the geographical margin, they were not marginal types like so many ecstatic mediums in the Third World. The oracle of Dodona was dedicated to Zeus, the central god of the Greeks, and elsewhere it was Apollo who inspired the women. As in many other cultures, his inspiration was interpreted as a sexual relationship, even though the god did not limit himself in his sexual preferences: male seers were also the subject of his irresistible attention. The representation of love between god and seers sometimes assumed bizarre forms. According to the celibatory churchfather Jerome, Apollo penetrated the Pythia the moment that she was prophesying with spread thighs above the tripod.¹³

The male Greek seers, on the other hand, did not operate in ecstasy, but they were technical specialists, experts of the intestines of sacrificial victims and, especially, the flight of birds, a technique they had derived from the Ancient Near East.¹⁴ Naturally, to a certain extent their technical expertise could be acquired by others. The general Xenophon (*Anabasis* 5.6.29) writes that his *mantis* could not deceive (!) him during a sacrifice, as he himself had picked up the necessary experience in this area. In his *Cyropaedia* (1.6.2) he lets the father of the old Cyrus, the founder of the Persian empire, teach his son the mantic art, in order to make him independent of seers in later life.

Calchas was also a “problem-solver”. His role well fits that of seers in traditional African communities, who often have to ratify decisions already taken and advise people by making choices. Rather surprisingly, they usually are already offered alternative solutions and it is rare that they have to rely on their own intuition and technique.¹⁵

Traditional seers, then, are not people who just forecast the future like gypsies with their crystal ball. In some respects, they resemble the man who is employed by Dutch politicians—but most Western countries have a comparable official—to compute political alternatives and to “predict” the future, but whose advice is thrown into the dustbin the moment his predictions displease politicians: the director of the Dutch Central Planning Office.

Precisely because of their technical activities, aristocratic seers were in need of some legitimization. That is why they stressed contact with a god as the ultimate source of their message. *Theiadzo* is the Greek word for “to prophesy”, and *theopropos*, “he who makes the gods appear”, is a synonym of *mantis*. As the case of Calchas illustrates, among the Greek gods it was Apollo who was the god of oracles and seers. This god separated the pure from the impure and culture from nature; similarly, he separated the certain from the uncertain in the present, past and future.¹⁶

Finally, the seer was also a warrior: on Greek shield-straps we can see Amphiaraus with full military equipment and Mopsus as athlete during the funeral games for Jason’s grandfather Pelias. Warriorship was an integral part of the archaic, aristocratic status, but the military profession was not without risks, and Greek history

mentions various seers who were killed in action. When at Thermopylae in 480 B.C. the Spartan army with its king Leonidas was massacred by the Persians, their seer Megistias too remained behind on the battlefield. During the Athenian invasion into Egypt in the middle of the fifth century the seer Telenikos perished, and we can still read his name in big letters on the inscription honouring those fallen. And in a recently published list of citizens of Argos, who were killed during a campaign ca. 400 B.C., the *mantis* is mentioned immediately after the “king” (*probasileus*).¹⁷

Back to the *Iliad*. Besides the Greek Calchas, the epic also mentions two Trojan seers. Poulydamas was the only one who “saw the future and the past, he was a close friend of Hector” (XVII.250-1); evidently, he was a seer and a comrade in arms of the great Trojan hero, with whom he commanded the young warriors (XII.196).¹⁸ The second seer is Helenus, a son of the Trojan king Priam, “by far the best of the ornithomancers” (VI.76) and able to hear “a voice of the gods” (VII.53); just like Calchas and Poulydamas, he also operated on the battlefield (XIII.576-600). Finally we find among the Trojan allies “Chromis and the ornithomancer Ennomos” (II.858), who commanded the Mysians, and the old Eurydamas, of whom Homer observes that in his divining dreams he did not see that his sons would join the war and die on the battlefield (V.149-51). Just as unfortunate was King Merops of Perconte, “who excelled beyond all men in knowledge of predictions” (II.831). His sons would not return home from the war either.¹⁹ In the *Iliad*, then, seers are king themselves or at least of royal blood. In any case, they belong to the highest strata of society. This picture is confirmed by Greek mythology. In the *Odyssey* we find prophecies of Nausithous, king of the Phaeacians (8.546-71, 13.172-3) and the story of Melampus, a young, unmarried seer who won a bride for his brother Bias and for himself a part of a kingdom with the belonging kingship. The kernel of this myth belongs to the older strata of Greek mythology, as Melampus’ knowledge of the language of animals demonstrates.²⁰ His great-grandson was the Amphiaraus, who had to join the expedition of the Seven against Thebes because of his qualities as a seer after the betrayal by his wife Eriphyle. Another distant relative was the seer Polyidos, whose father carried the significant name Koiranos, “Ruler”, and who was king of Argos.²¹

The mythological tradition also knows of other examples of king-seers, such as Anios of Delos (a son of Apollo), Mounichos (a king of the Molossians) and Phineus, the blind Thracian king whose divinatory qualities incited the Argonauts to shoot down the Harpies who daily defecated on his food.²²

Evolutionistic thinkers saw in these examples reminiscences of the “divine king”, a notion which gained great popularity at the beginning of this century through Frazer’s *The Golden Bough*.²³ This view is no longer tenable. Greek mythology is not a direct reflection of a past world and mythological interpretations are never cautious enough. When we now look once again careful at the king-seers, they all appear either to derive from later sources (Mounichos, Anios) or to be kings of fairylike peoples, such as the Phaeacians, or of non-Greek areas, such as Mysia, Thracia and Molossia. Moreover, the kingship of Melampus is almost certainly the invention of his historical descendants, the Melampodids, Greece’s most renowned family of seers.²⁴

Were these examples, then, perhaps attempts by poets, the principal producers of Greek mythology, to enlarge the “symbolic capital” of their patron, the king?²⁵ The stories about king-seers would fit well in the efforts of the Homeric kings in monopolising the “mediatorship” between gods and men. In the Archaic age (ca. 800-500 B.C.) the king was clearly deficient in effective power: he was a *primus inter pares* rather than a sovereign ruler. Now kings were already sacrificers at least since the Mycenean Age (ca. 1550-1200), even though they had to share their authority with heralds, aristocrats and professional priests. They had also successfully promoted the belief that their dreams had a special significance.²⁶

The quality of seer would surely be a welcome addition to the kings’ “religious capital”, which was of prime importance for their special position. The Indo-European king was originally above all a religious authority and this tradition had maintained itself in Greece, even though the Greek word for king, *basileus*, was unrelated to the root **reg* of the original Indo-European word for king, which can still be seen in the Latin *rex*, the Indian *Maharaja* (“great king”) and the names of the famous Gaulish opponents of Caeser, *Vercingetorix* and *Asterix*.²⁷

After the Homeric period we now move to more historical times,

where we will concentrate on the two most powerful Greek states, Sparta and Athens. Sparta was the only Greek state which had not abolished kingship in the course of the Archaic age. The two Spartan kings (n.18) were entitled to appoint the Pythioi, the officials who could consult the Delphic oracle but also were messmates of the kings—once again a proof of the close ties between kings and seers. Admittedly, the decisions about consulting the oracle were taken in public, but the Pythioi will surely have bribed the Delphic Pythia, if necessary. Moreover, the kings preserved the received oracles in an archive for future necessities. And if the occasion arose, they would happily produce an oracle appropriate for the occasion.²⁸

Now the Spartan kings had been obliged to share their power with the ephors since the Archaic age. It is highly interesting to note that this board of Sparta's highest magistrates had also created its own access to the gods by regularly consulting an incubation oracle in Thalamae, a hamlet near by Sparta.²⁹ In the official building of the ephors there also was the grave of the Cretan Epimenides, one of the ancient miracle-workers, whom precisely Sparta worshipped as a giver of oracles. The expression “the skin of Epimenides”, which a collection of proverbs connects with Sparta, strongly suggests that the ephors had availed themselves of a leather scroll with oracles, the so-called *diphtherai*, which were also used elsewhere in Greece. Considering the competition between kings and ephors, the latter had probably created this possibility to consult the gods in order to be independent of the kings also on this important point.³⁰

What was the situation in Athens, Sparta's great enemy? In 682 B.C. the Athenians had abolished kingship and replaced the king with a board of magistrates, the archons, who in turn were pushed aside by the tyrant Pisistratus in the course of the sixth century. Regarding his connection with seers we only know that according to late sources he was nick-named ‘Bakis’, the name of one of the famous seers in the Archaic age.³¹ But during the reign of his sons and successors an official collection of oracles was preserved in a temple on the Acropolis, the religious and strategic centre of Athens.

Of Pisistratus' sons Hippias was a skilful expounder of oracles and Hipparchus expelled the man who had been officially charged

with collecting oracles, Onomacritus, when he was taken in the very act of falsifying one of these oracles. Around 520 B.C. Pisistratus' homonymous grandson dedicated an altar to Apollo Pythios, i.e. the Apollo of Delphi, of which the original inscription is still to be seen. It looks very much, therefore, as though the tyrants attempted to monopolise access to the oracles.³²

Although in 510 B.C. the Spartan king Cleomenes ousted the Pisistratids and took the oracles home in the process, we also hear of oracles in state archives during the high-point of Athenian democracy.³³ But as opposed to the time of the tyrants, access to the sacred was now no longer monopolised by the aristocracy. A number of new priesthoods were created, written oracles circulated in public, and great politicians such as Cimon and Alcibiades employed private seers, the latter even a number of them.³⁴ According to Plutarch (*Nicias* 4.2), the business-minded Nicias even employed a seer who directed his attention mainly to the silver mines of Laurium, clearly a kind of investment broker.

The most interesting example is certainly the seer Lampon. From numerous epigraphical and literary sources we know that he was one of the most prominent politicians of fifth-century Athens. He not only assisted in founding the pan-Hellenic colony Thurii, but he also was the first signatory of the peace between Athens and Sparta in 421 B.C. It is significant that precisely this most prominent seer of his time was said to cultivate close relations with Pericles, the leading statesman during Athens' golden age. This cooperation must have led to a most powerful partnership in Athens' political life.³⁵

Yet democracy was not a fertile soil for oracles and seers. After the Persian wars in the beginning of the fifth century Athens hardly consulted any more oracles about internal political problems.³⁶ Comedy and tragedy now frequently mocked seers and criticised their greed and corruption. Catastrophic for the seers, though, was the great expedition to Sicily in 413 B.C., where the Athenian army was cut to pieces. Apparently, this misadventure had been warmly endorsed by all kinds of private oracle-mongers. The disappointment following the crushing defeat was the death-blow for the public role of seers. It is significant that the historian Thucydides in that part of his work that covers the period after 416 no longer

pays any interest to oracles and that Aristophanes no longer criticises seers in his comedies after 413: evidently, he had lost all interest in those who once were one of the main targets of his mockery.³⁷

In the fourth century the consultation of seers and oracles is no more mentioned in the many orations which have preserved from that period, even though the office of public *mantis* continued to exist into the third century.³⁸ But the prestige of these seers was not very high: in the public sphere these former sources of authority had lost most of their respectability. Plato (*Republic* 365B) even brackets together the *mantis* with the despicable begging priests of Cybele. “Ventriloquizing” mediums, *engastrimythoi*, continued to operate in the private sphere. These women, but also men, were considered to be possessed by a spirit and were still seen in action by the apostle Paul in Philippi (*Acts of Apostles* 16).³⁹

It was only backward Macedonia that lagged behind in these developments. Philip II and his son Alexander the Great still fully employed seers for military aims. Both kings especially consulted Aristandros, a seer from Telmessos. This Carian city, of which the ruins are still visible in the south-east of present Turkey, was famous for its seers and it is typical for this profession that some of them even journeyed to faraway Macedonia. Such a mobility was not uncommon among seers. The name of the already mentioned Mopsus (see n. 8) has emerged as Muksus in Hittite and Cilician inscriptions and originally he must therefore have been an Anatolian. Aristandros, though, was the last prominent Macedonian seer. Alexander’s successor no longer needed such advisors.⁴⁰

This gradual disappearance of oracles and seers from the public domain was closely connected with the development of democracy. In the Archaic age oracles helped people to make choices in problematic situations, to postpone decisions or to shift responsibilities to others. Democracy did not need such means to make decisions. The influence of seers suffered from the same development, but the traditional connection between aristocracy and seers was a delaying factor in this process. In the end, though, they too could not escape from the growing self-confidence of the Athenians, the professionalization of the army, and the increasing understanding of the behaviour of humans and animals which now were considered as

“natural” events once thought to be unexplainable. The man who once interpreted the hooting of the owl as a message of the gods was thought to be pious in the Archaic age, but in the fourth century he would be looked down upon by the intellectual elite as plainly superstitious.⁴¹

2. Israel

The connection of seers and political power in Israel has received little attention, although the literature about Israel’s prophets is immense.⁴² My choice of Israel as second area to be studied is not fortuitous. Not only has Western culture been profoundly influenced by its Greek and Jewish roots, but it is becoming more and more clear that in matters of religion Greece received many impulses from the Syro-Palestinian areas: altars, temples, gods and images of gods, ways of purification, oracles, ecstatic divination—it is a still growing list.⁴³

When we look in Israel for figures comparable with the *mantis* we soon encounter the *nabi*,⁴⁴ the word usually translated as “prophet”, although older terms, such as *ro’eh* (“seer”) and *hozeh* (“visionary”), also existed. In *I Samuel* (9.9) it is explicitly said: “for he that is now called prophet (*nabi*) was beforetime called a seer (*ro’eh*)”.⁴⁵ We should realize, though, that the word “prophet” is a Greek term, chosen by the Jews when they translated the Torah into Greek. In the Greek world the *prophetes* was the spokesman of a god. He transposed the impenetrable sounds of a seeress, such as the Pythia of Delphi, in understandable, if not necessarily clear, verses. A *prophetes* could be a *mantis*, but the two functions often existed separately.⁴⁶

The Jewish translation “prophet” is a choice, then, from one of the several meanings of *nabi*, which was inspired by the performance of the later prophets; it gives only an incomplete impression of the wider meaning of *nabi*. Even though *mantis* and *nabi* are not identical, their “family resemblance”, to borrow a well-known term by Wittgenstein,⁴⁷ sufficiently warrants a comparison, the more so as in the Ancient Near East deductive and inspired divinatory practices were closely related.⁴⁸

As in Greece, I would like to start my analysis with the oldest

accessible history. But the relative outsider who thinks that he can engage himself in the religion of ancient Israel soon notices that he has landed himself into a marsh, from which even the Baron Von Münchhausen could not escape. The historical books *Deuteronomy* through *II Kings* only received their definitive content after the Babylonian exile.⁴⁹ Consequently, the historicity of many early events and persons is highly debatable.⁵⁰

Moreover, our knowledge of the prehistory of Israelite prophecy continues to be enriched by new archeological findings. During recent excavations in North-Syrian Ebla (1974-76) claytablets dating from the middle of the third millennium have come to light with a term related to *nabi*.⁵¹ Earlier archeological findings had already demonstrated that prophetical practices in Israel were closely comparable to those among the Egyptians,⁵² Hittites, Assyrians, and in Mari.⁵³ Any definitive pronunciation on the prehistory of Israelite prophecy is therefore still premature.⁵⁴

On the other hand, we agree with Frank Cross that prophecy in its most classic form emerges and declines along with Israelite kingship. Admittedly Old Testament scholars are highly sceptical about the possibility of recovering any trustworthy data about the earliest period of prophecy. But as Israelite kingship originated only around 1000 B.C., it is a relative latecomer in the history of Israel. Leading circles may well have preserved anecdotes about this radical change in the society of their ancestors. Similarly, Greek tradition remembered many stories about the abolishment of kingship.

In addition, *I Kings* 14 mentions *The book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel* and *The book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah*. These historical works have not survived and in any case they will have been coloured in favour of the victors, such as David and his dynasty, but they may well have rescued archaic traditions. It is not necessarily unreasonable, therefore, to consider the main lines of the immediate period before the rise of the monarchy, as sketched in the *Old Testament*, as historically acceptable.⁵⁵

Anybody interested in the relation between prophets and political power in ancient Israel will still be struck by Max Weber's study of ancient Jewry, *Das antike Judentum*.⁵⁶ Unlike most Old Testament scholars, Weber attempted to locate the prophets in a specific social

reality and to take into account important historical processes, such as state formation and the spread of literacy. In addition, he possessed a point of view, which was sharpened by his study of Greco-Roman antiquity, Western history, India, China, and contemporary ethnology. Weber postulated already the existence of initiation and a *Männerhaus* among the Benjaminites, whereas the importance of social anthropology for the study of the *Old Testament* is only more recently becoming recognized.⁵⁷ On the other hand, Weber clearly went too far in his detailed reconstructions of Israel's earliest social structures. If the books of *Samuel* have indeed received their definitive shape at a late moment, they can hardly contain reliable information about all the details of the social structures they claim to describe. The difficulties arising in the reconstruction of the Homeric society should sound a warning note here.⁵⁸ Moreover, Weber too often used models derived from classical antiquity due to his own study of that period, as well as through the influence of his contemporary, the great ancient historian Eduard Meyer (1855-1930).⁵⁹

We have to be very careful, then, with the reports about the history of Israel before the monarchic era. Yet the stories of the period immediately preceding the rise of the monarchy still give us an impression about the position of the prophet: particularly notable is the development from Samuel, the last judge, via Saul, the first king, to David, the founder of the united kingdom of Israel. From this trio Samuel still occupied a position, as encountered in early Greek tradition and still paralleled in modern African societies. He was a seer and was consulted by Saul after the loss of his mules. Moreover, he received his revelations from Jahweh, even if we do not know how. Samuel was also indispensable for offerings, fulfilled the office of judge, and acted as commander in battles (*I Samuel* 7-9). In other words, his seership was still relatively undifferentiated and formed part of a wider position in society.⁶⁰

The situation is already different with Saul, the first king and to a certain extent the “successor” of Samuel. In the case of Saul his military activities were the most important. In addition he was also a sacrificer, even though this led to a rupture with Samuel (*I Samuel* 13). Finally, Saul was a prophet and we hear twice that he fell into a state of ecstasy. The first time happened straight after his enoint-

ment to king, when on his way home he encountered a group of prophets. They were in trance, while accompanying themselves with the music of harps, timbrels, and pipes. As Samuel had predicted, Saul joined the group and also fell into the rapture which was clearly evoked by the exciting music—as still happens everywhere in the world. This trance underlined the legitimation of his selection, as the Spirit of Jahweh, the central god of Israel,⁶¹ had come upon him. Saul evidently was close to the prophets, although we do not hear of any oracles or predictions by him (*I Samuel* 10).

About the time of Saul's second ecstasy we are told that he joined a group of prophets under guidance of Samuel, stripped off his clothes, and lay down naked all day and all night (*I Samuel* 19). This is an important notice, as it shows that the Israelite prophets practised a certain technique of ecstasy; shamans and Hellenistic mediums similarly undressed in order to reach total rapture. Saul's ecstasy was apparently so intense that he lay motionless for a long period of time. It is understandable that the elite worried: "Is Saul also among the prophets!" We too would be highly surprised if we would hear the Dutch Queen Beatrix or the English Queen Elisabeth call out "Hallelujah" and "Amen" during a service of the Pentecostals. A gentleman or a lady simply does not do such things—not then, not now.⁶²

The development of the status of the prophets after Samuel and Saul is well illustrated by the *coupé d'état* of David's son Adonijah. Although David was already dying, he was not yet senile and still able to consult his close retainers, amongst whom are named the priest Zadok, the chief of his bodyguard, Benaiah, and the prophet Nathan (*I Kings* 1). Whereas in the case of Saul these three functions were still united in one person, with David they are divided among a staff which took his orders. Evidently, the build-up of David's kingdom went together with a differentiation of offices and competences.

Even though the prophet Nathan was in David's service, his office had still retained so much prestige that he was able to berate the king after his affair with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband Uriah (*II Samuel* 12). During the court intrigues around the succession of David by Solomon, Nathan played the role of "kingmaker". This shows that the prophet could also have political

influence and, like the *mantis*, act as advisor. Besides Nathan, we also hear of another prophet, Gad, who is specifically called "David's seer" (*II Samuel* 24.11). But we know so little about him that at the beginning of our era a book with prophecies was named after him, which was discovered only, curiously enough, among the Indian Jews in Cochin in the eighteenth century.⁶³

After Solomon's accession to the throne we no longer hear of prominent court prophets. In critical moments Jahweh appeared directly to the king in a dream (*I Kings* 3.9), not via a prophet. The absolutist ruler Solomon did not need such an intermediary and could suffice with a private "hot-line" to Jahweh. This development did not mean that the prophets were relegated to the non-speaking parts on the political stage. From Solomon's successors the rebel Jeroboam was still designated by the prophet Ahiah, while his son Rehoboam resigned to the division of his empire only after an advice of the prophet Semaiah.⁶⁴

From the ninth century we still know the names of two prophets who must have strongly appealed to the Israelite imagination: Elijah and Elisha. Both men did not remain at the court but were in regular contact with the king and announced the reign of future rulers and the death of ruling kings. Both predicted catastrophic events such as droughts and famines. Both, finally, acted as miracle workers.

Elijah went to Zarephath where he prevented the widow's oil in her lamp from diminishing, whose son he revived from the dead. Elisha made bad water drinkable, poisoned food eatable, and had two she-bears tear forty-two children who had made fun of his baldness. The latter execution was surely an overreaction, but sympathy with the prophet increases as the loss of one's own hair becomes more visible.⁶⁵

Elisha's fame was such that he was even invited by a high official of the Syrian king Hazael, whose name recently has emerged on votives in Greek sanctuaries. The notice is perhaps legendary, as are so many stories about the prophets. Yet the mobility of the prophet can hardly be called into doubt. Another fine example of the prophet's mobility we find in the traditions about Balaam, who was summoned with his speaking donkey by the Moabite king Balak. Although he was required to curse Israel, he pronounced a

blessing against the will of his principal (*Numbers* 21-2, 31). As at first sight this looks like a typical legend, it is the more striking that Dutch archeologists unearthed a Hebrew-like inscription (ca. 780 B.C) in Trans-Jordan in 1969. The inscription begins with the words: "This is the book of Balaam, the son of Peor, a seer of the gods". The traditions about the mobility of Elisha and Balaam are indications of an aspect of seership which we already encountered in the case of the Anatolian seers Mopsus and Aristandros.⁶⁶

The uncertain character of the tradition ensures that we see Elijah and Elisha as through a looking-glass darkly. We know that both were of aristocratic origin,⁶⁷ but both had also distanced themselves from their social background. Neither seems to have been married, both had power over animals. Elijah did not wear a common garment but one made of camel skin, which he left to Elisha.

Through their marginalised status and appearance these prophets could exert more influence than those aristocrats who were liable to the normal restraints of social intercourse. In this way they were free to address rulers without becoming a threat to them. Their miracles are the proofs of their power as observed and interpreted by their followers and the local population. These miracles also show us the preoccupations of their time: war, food, drinkable water, incurable diseases. In more than one respect these prophets are comparable to the influential "holy men" of Late Antiquity, who have been so eloquently studied by Peter Brown.⁶⁸

A similar marginalisation we find among the writing prophets, who lived in the shadows of Assur and Babylon. Hosea married a whore (1.2), Isaiah went around naked for a whole year (20.2), Jeremiah remained unmarried (16.2). These prophets also exerted political influence, although they seemed to have been consulted especially in times of great distress, as was the case with Isaiah during the siege of Jerusalem by the Assyrian Sennacherib (*Isaiah* 37).

Highly instructive in this respect is the debate in front of the priests and the people between Jeremiah, who advised subjection to Babylon, and the prophet Hananiah, who opposed this political choice (*Jeremiah* 28). The public character of this debate is an indication of the status of these prophets. By speaking in the name of Jahweh they debated in an indirect way, but the political point

of their prophecies is unmistakable. It can hardly be surprising, then, that the Judean king Jehojakim (608-595 B.C.) had the embarrassing prophet Uriah executed and buried in the graveyard of the common people—a clear indication of the otherwise high status of the prophets (*Jeremiah* 26.23).

In the awkward political situation of the last century of Judah's independence the influence of the prophets must have been considerable. Max Weber, though, thought otherwise. According to him, the prophets were “nicht primär an politischen Interessen orientiert”. In this respect Weber's ideas about the prophets were still too strongly influenced by the romantic vision of the prophets as religious individualists, which has been propagated by the greatest German Old Testament scholar of the nineteenth century, Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918).⁶⁹

Yet despite these similarities we have clearly arrived in a different world. To begin with, we notice the prominence of literacy: Isaiah wrote on a tablet (8.1), Jeremiah had to write down the word of Jahweh into a book (30.2), Habakuk had to announce the judgment of the Chaldaeans on boards, Zachariah saw a scroll flying (5.1), and Ezekiel even was commanded by God to eat up a scroll (2.9). This new stress on writing fits the results of the most recent archeological research, which through an analysis of the number of settlements, public works and the spread of luxury goods has convincingly demonstrated that in the eighth century Judah experienced a high degree of “Verstaatlichung” with a concomitant strong spread of literacy.

This development will also have caused the disappearance of miracles and the emphasis on trance and possession among the prophets. If we follow the perspective of Norbert Elias' classic study *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation* (1939) we may assume that such expressions had become less fitting in the surely more civilised world of urbanised Jerusalem. This gradual disappearance of elements once so characteristic for the prophets must have led to the rise of the need for new kinds of legitimization. That is why we find such a strong accent on their call by Jahweh among the writing prophets.⁷⁰

It is hard to trace the precise position of the prophets after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., but their political role in exile can

only have been limited. Jeremiah (29) mentions that two “false prophets”, undoubtedly political opponents, were roasted alive by the king of Babylon. Babylonian and Persian kings evidently had no place for a political role for prophets.

There is equally little known about their position in the period between Ezra and Nehemiah, on the one hand, and that of the Maccabaeans, on the other. It looks as if in the times after the Babylonian exile Israel was, so to speak, sealed off from the outside world; in addition, the internal relations were ritualised by the accentuation of living according to the Torah. An interesting but neglected confirmation of the increasing austerity of life in Israel we find ca. 300 B.C. in the first Greek description of Israel by Hecataeus of Abdera, a diplomat of Ptolemy I. He compares Israelite education implicitly but unmistakably, as the great historian Arnaldo Momigliano once observed, with the Spartan regime which he knew from his own experience.⁷¹

The English anthropologist Mary Douglas has pointed more than once to the close relationship between the way a society draws its social borders and its attitude towards the body. If we follow her insights, we may reasonably assume that in the social and political centre of post-exilic Israel ecstatic prophecies or callings through shocking visions no longer would be acceptable. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the last prophet who was incorporated into the canon, Daniel, received his divine inspiration only via dreams.⁷²

These political and social developments will have contributed to the increasing association of the prophets with the priests, the group within the elite with whom they were closely allied and who had filled the political vacuum after the fall of the monarchy. Accordingly, the last prophets (Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi) greatly stressed the restoration of the temple and its cults and the correct ways of sacrifice, and the priests started to consult again the Urim and Thummim.

This close cooperation between priests and prophets must have led to a gradual merger. When in the time of the Maccabaeans our sources become more detailed, the high priest appears to have prophetic gifts. One of the greatest of the Maccabees, John Hyrcanus I (134-104) was secular ruler, high priest and prophet at the same time. His prophecy, though, no longer was “charismatic” but a

question of “routine”. The differentiation which had begun after Samuel was shortly abolished, but prophecy itself had nearly changed out of all recognition in the course of time.⁷³

3. Early modern Europe

The roots of early modern Europe are firmly anchored in the Middle Ages, a period in which prophets and prophecies were rife.⁷⁴ The most important elements in the medieval, prophetic arsenal were derived from the Bible, Classical Antiquity, the Byzantine Empire and the contemporary world. The Bible provided important material with the seventh chapter of *Daniel* about the dream of the four empires and the sixth chapter of *Revelation* in which the Book of the Seven Seals is opened.

Classical Antiquity and the Byzantines long exerted influence through the apocalyptic prophecies of the Syrian pseudo-Methodius about the coming of a Messianic emperor and by the predictions of the Byzantine emperor Leo the Wise (886-912).⁷⁵ The Sibylline oracles, though, were perhaps the most influential of all. They derived their name from the Sibyl, the prophetess who, as we already saw, came from Erythrae. Already in the course of late antiquity, a collection of pagan, Jewish and Christian oracles started to circulate under her name, which enjoyed enormous popularity in the Middle Ages and long afterwards, not least because they were thought to contain the original predictions of the Delphic oracle.⁷⁶

Finally, the Middle Ages also made contributions in their own right. Geoffrey of Monmouth (d. 1155) popularised the prophecies of the legendary magician Merlin.⁷⁷ His multi-interpretational writings occasioned the rise of the Calabrian abbot Joachim of Fiore (ca. 1130-1202), even though Joachim himself refused to be called a prophet. His fame was such that he was consulted by the English king Richard Lionheart on his way to the Holy Land in 1191.⁷⁸ It is evident, though, that these prophecies hardly resemble those by the Greek *mantis* or the Israelite *nabi*. It seems that their position at court was partially taken over in the Middle Ages by astrologers, of whom we hear soon after the introduction of astrology in Western-Europe in the eleventh century from Arabic

Spain.⁷⁹ According to Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae* (12.4), which appeared in 1136, the Anglo-Saxon king Edwin of Northumbria had already consulted in the seventh century the astrologer Pellitus about military matters, exactly in the way that Greek rulers employed their *mantis*. But Geoffrey was a notorious phantast, who happily retrojected phenomena from his own time into the past and in the case of Pellitus he gives himself away by letting the astrologer come from Spain. In any case, Geoffrey and other medieval sources mention a great number of court astrologers whose influence we are unable to trace in detail.⁸⁰ That is perhaps significant. Astrology was still awaiting its period of greatest influence.⁸¹

It is only during the Renaissance that we find prophets, in our case "prophetesses", at the courts of Italian nobles. The dukes of Mantua, for example, had "recruited" two women, Osanna Andreasi and Stefana Quinzani, who provided spiritual advice through their visions and prophecies and in this way enlarged the prestige of the court. In contemporary Spain, a "prophetess" acquired the patronage of such high aristocrats as the Duke of Alba, King Ferdinand of Aragon and the head of the Spanish church, Cardinal Cisneros. Strikingly, we never hear of male court-prophets in this period: males could perhaps turn into a political threat, but in this period female prophets limited themselves mainly to spiritual activities. When in 1516 the fifth Lateran Council (1512-1517) issued a ban on prophesying during sermons and determined that every claim of divine revelation had to be tested by a bishop or the pope, the "spiritual mothers" were gradually replaced by male Jesuits.⁸² A decade after the Council, male prophets had already disappeared from the Italian street-scene.⁸³

The offensive of the Church against seers and prophets could be very successful through the presence of the Inquisition in Spain and, somewhat later, in Italy. That is why in the following years prophecy hardly played a role any longer in these Catholic countries.⁸⁴ For the Church, controlling this flood of prophets and seers had been really necessary, since the apocalyptic mood of the later Middle Ages had seen a multitude of predictions, which in all kinds of ways threatened to undermine the doctrines and authority of the Church and even pictured the pope as the embodiment of the Anti-Christ.⁸⁵

When in 1520 Martin Luther burned the papal bull and with it, so to speak, the Middle Ages, the European rulers already had stopped employing permanent advisers with supernatural inspiration. That is why this period may look less relevant for our subject. Yet the medium of prophecy still had enough influence to frighten rulers. Controlling political prophecy thus was a first prerequisite for the emerging absolutist state.⁸⁶ In the Catholic countries prophecy was efficiently eliminated by the Inquisition, but in those areas where Protestantism became popular the situation was rather different.

Among the great Reformers Calvin was very sceptical regarding prophecy in his own time, Zwingli considered prophecy to be the preaching of the Word,⁸⁷ but Luther still stood on this point with one foot in the Middle Ages. He was very susceptible to contemporary apocalyptic tendencies and did not refrain from prophesying himself. After his death in 1546 his followers published a collection with 120 of his prophecies, which was reprinted in 1574 in an expanded edition: a true bestseller!

The prophecies by Luther and his followers had one great disadvantage, though. They were strongly eschatological in nature and hardly suitable for the daily problems of the common man and woman, let alone for the many problems of the German princes. Moreover, it would not be until the Thirty Year War (1618-1648) that Lutheran theologians managed to develop clear criteria to distinguish between true and false prophecy. Consequently, despite its great popularity prophecy never developed into a means of power in Germany.⁸⁸

It was different in England, the country for which we are well informed thanks to Keith Thomas' classic study *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (1971).⁸⁹ The centralising government strongly disliked prophecies, and even more so when the succession to the throne was in dispute, as was the case with Elisabeth I. This queen already introduced a bill in the first year of her reign (1558) in order to punish prophets.⁹⁰ The Spanish king Philip II, on the contrary, did not feel threatened and could afford more lenient penalties. Lucretia, a young girl who had forecast the defeat of the Armada in her dreams, was only banished from Madrid and confined to a religious institution for the short period of two years.⁹¹

Elisabeth's measures were efficient and it was not before central authority collapsed during the Civil War (1642-1649) that England was again flooded with prophecies and predictions.⁹² This phenomenon fits the observation of the Dutch social historian Willem Frijhoff that in early modern times the amount of prophecy depends on the degree of disturbance of the social equilibrium; he has well illustrated his thesis with the numbers and dates of publication of brochures and pamphlets which appeared in Holland in the year 1672 when the country was invaded by the French, English and the bishop of Münster.⁹³ It is the same phenomenon that we observed in Greece, where the catastrophic Athenian expedition caused a strong rise in predictions and oracles, and in Israel where the threat to Jerusalem by Assur and Babylon provoked prophecy and counter-prophecy, oracle and counter-oracle. The fatal fall of Rome in 410 was equally preceded by several years of feverish prophesying. Finally, a similar development could be seen in late medieval and early modern Frisia (in the north of the Netherlands), where all kinds of prophecies with promises of a better time circulated, precisely at the moment when Frisia's political independence was declining and its social unity disintegrating.⁹⁴

After the return of Charles II in 1662 the public role of English prophets was finished. The ruling classes refused to be bullied (as they saw it) any longer by divinely inspired cobblers and fishwives, and they reintroduced censorship. The restoration of central authority went hand in hand with profound changes in the intellectual climate. The philosophers Bacon and Hobbes now started to explore the physical and psychological explanations for premonitions. Biblical texts like Daniel, which for so long had stimulated the religious imagination with its vision of the four empires, and the book of *Revelations* were now taken figuratively instead of literally. Yet we should beware of an all too optimistic picture in this respect: Newton remained deeply interested in prophecy until the end of his life.⁹⁵

A similar development had already occurred in Germany. Here the arrival of the Swedish king Gustavus Adolphus on the battlefields of the Thirty Year War (1618-1648) led to a last, intense upsurge of political prophecy. The most interesting prophet of this period was probably Johann Warner, a Saxonian farmer, who

enlisted in the Swedish army. He was so successful with his prophecies that he made a military career and even won the confidence of the brilliant Swedish general Torstenson (1603-1651), who valued him for his political and strategic advices. But when the Swedish king was killed in action near Lützen in 1632 Warner's influence started to decline.

Warner's career shows that in the seventeenth century a prophet with a keen nose for political realities still could occupy a function similar to that of the Greek *mantis*. Yet at that time Lutheran theologians were already mounting an offensive against magic, occultism and an all too eager interest in eschatology. At the same time, the news reporting current events began to replace the interest in prophecies concerning the imminent end of the world; it is hardly chance that those years saw the birth of the newspaper.⁹⁶

The printing press had helped to promote the Reformation, to make astrology accessible to everybody, and to spread the whole spectrum of Catholic and Protestant prophecies. But the influence of the printing press had also other effects. For example, the publication in 1572 of Henri Estienne's magisterial Greek dictionary, the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, made it possible for the German philologist Opsopoeus (1556-1596) to prove that the *Oracula Sibyllina* were not the original oracles of the Sibyl but a late Christian falsification. The role of prophecy, then, was pushed back in rather different ways in Europe.⁹⁷

In England, astrologers as well as prophets played an important role in predicting the future. They occupied a function which in some respects closely resembled that of the Greek *mantis*, and English kings and aristocrats regularly consulted them, even though official court astrologers no longer existed after the Middle Ages.⁹⁸ Their prominent position in society probably explains the absence of any attempt to muzzle them. In any case, astrology was *de facto* harmless for the rulers, as long as its practitioners abstained from politics. When the astrologers actively engaged in politics during the Civil War, their influence quickly started to wane. After the restoration of the monarchy astrology was immediately censored, as was prophecy. Moreover, new astronomic insights made the craft intellectually less and less acceptable. In various ways, these changes were already the herald of the "crise de la conscience

européenne'', as Paul Hazard called his classic study (1935) of the great shift from faith to reason in Western-European culture. Admittedly, this process took its time, and Louis XIV still sent an astrologer as ambassador to England, as Charles II had great faith in astrology. The envoy had to be recalled quickly, though, when he proved to be unable to forecast the winners of the horse races to the king.⁹⁹

In Lutheran Germany, astrologers initially created a furor, although they hardly had any political influence. An interesting aspect of the German development was the gradual convergence of prophecy and astrology: vicars and astrologers regularly produced the same type of apocalyptic predictions. That is why the decline of astrology in German started at an earlier date than in England: it became a victim of the general aversion against prophecy.¹⁰⁰

To conclude, around 1700 prophecy and astrology had served their turn as sources of authority in public discourse. Both now disappeared into the wings, from which they would appear only in times of crisis. For example, prophets still played a political role in the, admittedly isolated, Cevennes after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. Their performance was legitimated by all kinds of miracles, which helped them to occupy a central place in the small Huguenotic communities.¹⁰¹

During the political revolutions of nineteenth-century France prophets and prophecies also played an important role and in the winter of 1939-1940 German planes even dropped pamphlets with a prediction by Nostradamus on the French lines.¹⁰² And only recently it came out that president Reagan and his wife secretly consulted an astrologer for important decisions—a behaviour typical for a president who was generally judged to have great difficulties with complex problems.¹⁰³

With this last, somewhat depressing example, the moment has arrived to present some conclusions, which I will limit here to the subject of my lecture, the history of religion in general and, thirdly, my own plans for the immediate future. First, it is clear that the ruling powers liked to make use of prophecy and astrology as long as these were recognised sources of authority. In this period of time seers and prophets were usually "our kind of people" and belonged to the same social level, at least in Greece and Israel. Their influ-

ence varied, depending on the political structure: tyrants attempted to monopolise access to the gods via seers but democracy made the medium of prophecy accessible to everybody. Consequently, the strong position of the Israelite prophets suggests a relatively weak position of the kings.¹⁰⁴ Bourdieu has formulated this relationship well: “objective power relations tend to reproduce themselves in symbolic power relations”.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, the medium of prophecy did not remain untouched by the cultural developments of its time. Ecstasy was no longer acceptable in a civilised society and the book became more important as literacy increased.

Secondly, it is generally accepted since anthropologists like Geertz, Spiro and, in our own country, Van Baaren that religion has to be studied as a function of the general culture.¹⁰⁶ In practice, this principle has often led to a description of religions based on the general socio-cultural system. However, in analysing the position and practices of seers and prophets I have been struck by the influence exerted by single events themselves (the Athenian expedition to Sicily, the fall of Jerusalem, the English Civil War) on religion. This would mean that the history of religion has to pay more attention than is customary to the *histoire événementielle*.

Finally, it is rather unusual that a professor in the history of religions also incorporates Christianity in his discussions, as I have done. Traditionally, at least in the Netherlands, he studies either the living, non-Christian religions or ancient religions, such as those of Egypt or Rome. My Chair of “General History of Religions and Comparative Science of Religion” encompasses much, too much: Neanderthal and New Age, Argentinian Patagonians and Siberian Yakuts. That is impossible. Given my background as ancient historian and considering the influence of the ancient world on the Western religious tradition, I will concentrate on the Mediterranean: hence my discussion of Greece and Israel. My choice of early modern Europe aims to underline the importance of Christianity for the Western tradition. It also indicates that Christianity can not stay outside the scope of the newly founded Groningen field of study *Sciences of Religion*, which is unique for Holland. I hope therefore in the future to make some contributions not only to the analysis of Mediterranean religions but also to the understanding of Christianity, if not from the

perspective of the *histoire de l'église* but from that of the *histoire religieuse*.¹⁰⁷

*Dixi.*¹⁰⁸

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¹ On Van der Leeuw see especially the personal portrait by F. Siersma, *Prof. Dr. G. van der Leeuw: dienaar van God en hoogleraar in Groningen* (Amsterdam, 1951); H.G. Hubbeling, *Divine Presence in Ordinary Life. Gerardus van der Leeuw's twofold method in his thinking on art and religion*, Meded. Kon. Ak. Wet., Afd. Lett., NR 49.1 (Amsterdam 1986); the contributions by J. Bremmer, W. Hofstee, Y. Kuiper, L. Leertouwer, M. Pye, H. te Velde, J. Waardenburg and D. Wiebe to H.G. Kippenberg and B. Luchesi (eds), *Religionswissenschaft und Kulturkritik* (Marburg, 1991); J. Waardenburg, "G. van der Leeuw en de groei van de godsdienstwetenschap", *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 46 (1992) 89-103.

² On Th.P. van Baaren see especially the articles by H.J.W. Drijvers, Y. Kuiper and G.J. Zwier, and L. Leertouwer in the special issue dedicated to him (no. 180) of *Bzzletin* 20 (1990) and the interviews in *Hervormd Nederland* (10-1-1981) and *Theocreet* (Faculty of Theology of the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen) 18.5 (1987) 12-9.

³ For a bio-bibliography of Hubbeling see Ruurd Veldhuis, Andy F. Sanders, Heine J. Siebrand (eds), *Belief in God and Intellectual Honesty* (Assen and Maastricht, 1990) 181-92.

⁴ The cooperation in Groningen between history of religion and philosophy of religion has resulted in a number of interesting publications, see H.G. Kippenberg (ed), *Struggles of Gods* (Berlin and New York, 1984); H.G. Hubbeling and H.G. Kippenberg (eds), *On symbolic representation of religion: Groningen contributions to theories of symbols* (Berlin and New York, 1986), and H.G. Kippenberg, Yme B. Kuiper, Andy F. Sanders (eds), *Concepts of Person in Religion and Thought* (Berlin and New York, 1990).

⁵ Cf. R.R. Wilson, *Sociological Approaches to the Old Testament* (Philadelphia, 1984) 68; see also T.W. Overholt, "Prophecy: The Problem of Cross-Cultural Comparison", *Semeia* 21 (1982) 55-78, reprinted in B. Lang (ed.), *Anthropological Approaches to the Old Testament* (Philadelphia and London, 1985) 60-82; idem, *Prophecy in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Atlanta, 1986).

⁶ On seers and divination in Greece see especially A. Bouché-Leclercq, *Histoire de la divination dans l'antiquité*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1880) 62-92; W.R. Halliday, *Greek Divination* (London, 1913) 54-98; Th. Hopfner, "Mantike", *RE* 14 (1930) 1258-88; L. Ziehen, "Mantis", ibidem, 1345-55; P. Kett, *Prosopographie der historischen griechischen Mantees bis auf die Zeit Alexanders des Großen* (Diss. Neurenberg, 1966); A.D. Nock, *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World*, vol. 2, ed. Z. Stewart (Oxford, 1972) 534-50 (excellent); P. Roth, *Mantis: The Nature, Function and Status of a Greek Prophetic Type* (Diss. Bryn Mawr, 1982); W. Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Oxford, 1985)

111-4, 391f; J.-P. Vernant, *Mortals and Immortals*, ed. F. Zeitlin (Princeton, 1990) 303-17.

⁷ For the etymology of *mantis*, which is connected with a root *ma “to reveal”, see now M. Casevitz, “*Mantis*: le vrai sens”, *Revue des Études Grecques* 105 (1992) 1-18.

⁸ Amphiaraus: *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae (LIMC)* I.1 (1981) 691-713 (I. Krauskopf). Mopsus: Pindar, *P.* 4.191; D. Metzler, “Der Seher Mopsus auf den Münzen der Stadt Mallos”, *Kernos* 3 (1990) 235-50 (too speculative); J. Vanschoonwinkel, “Mopsos: légendes et réalité”, *Hethitica* 10 (1990) 185-211. Theoclymenus: A. Hoekstra on *Odyssey* 15.223-81.

⁹ On the role of the voice on the battlefield see J. Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death* (Oxford 1980) 37-9, who rightly compares texts like *Isaiah* 42.13 and *Joel* 3.16.

¹⁰ For the traditions about Calchas see *LIMC* V.1 (1990) 931-5 (V. Saladino).

¹¹ F. Graf, *Nordionische Kulte* (Rome, 1985) 335-50; H.W. Parke, *Sibyls and Sibylline Prophecy in Classical Antiquity* Cambridge, 1988) which should be consulted together with the reviews by N. Horsfall, *Classical Review* 40 (1990) 174f and D. Potter, *J. of Roman Archeology* 3 (1990) 471-83.

¹² Delphi: J. Fontenrose, *The Delphic Oracle* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1978). Dodona: Plato, *Phaedrus* 244 B; A. Gartzou-Tatti, “L’oracle de Dodone. Mythe et rituel”, *Kernos* 3 (1990) 175-84. Cassandra: J. Davreux, *La légende de la prophétesse Cassandre* (Paris, 1942); Graf, *Nordionische Kulte*, 347f (artificial conflation of various types of prophetesses); P. Wathelet, *Dictionnaire des Troyens de l’Iliade* I (Liège, 1988) 646-75; A. Moreau, “Les ambivalences de Cassandre”, in A.-F. Laurens (ed), *Entre hommes et dieux* (Paris, 1989) 145-67.

¹³ Third World: see the classic study by I.M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion* (London, 1989²). Apollo and “sexual” inspiration: Graf, *Nordionische Kulte*, 338f; Roth, *Mantis*, 48f.

¹⁴ On ornithomancy see Roth, *Mantis*, 81-98; the subject deserves further study. Ancient Near East: W. Burkert, *Die orientalisierende Époche in der griechischen Religion und Literatur* (Heidelberg, 1984) 54.

¹⁵ Fundamental for this approach: C.R. Whittaker, “The Delphic Oracle: Belief and Behaviour in Ancient Greece and Africa”, *Harvard Theological Review* 58 (1965) 21-47; for seers see A.-I. Berglund, *Zulu Thought-Patterns and Symbolism* (London and Kaapstad, 1989²) 172f.

¹⁶ *Theopropos*: P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*, 4 vls (Paris, 1968-80) s.v.; *Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos*, s.v. For the connection between *mantis* and a god note also names, such as Theomantis and Mantitheos. Apollo and divination: see the interesting observations by H.S. Versnel, “Apollo and Mars One Hundred Years after Roscher”, *Visible Religion* 4-5 (1986) 134-72.

¹⁷ On military seers see the full survey by W.K. Pritchett, *The Greek State War III* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1979) 47-90; R. Lonis, *Guerre et religion en Grèce à l’époque classique* (Paris, 1979) 95-115; M.H. Jameson, “Sacrifice before Battle”, in V.D. Hanson (ed), *Hoplites: The Classical Greek Battle Experience* (London, 1991, 197-227) 204f. Megistias: Herodotus 7.228 = Simonides VI Page. Athens: R. Meiggs and D. Lewis, *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions to the End of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford, 1988²) no. 33. Argos: *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* (= SEG) 29.361.

¹⁸ For this dual leadership, which probably explains the Spartan dyarchy, see H.W. Singor, *Oorsprong en betekenis van de hoplietenfalanx in het archaïsche Griekenland* (Diss. Leiden, 1988) 138-40.

¹⁹ For all these Trojans see Wathélet, *Dictionnaire* (n. 12), s.v.; for Helenus add now *Papyrus Kölner VI*.245.

²⁰ Melampus: *Odyssey* 11.281-97; 15.231-6 (old: A. Hoekstra ad loc.); K. Dowden, *Death of the Maiden* (London and New York, 1989) 96-115 (detailed analysis); E. Suarez de la Torre, “Les pouvoirs des devins et les récits mythiques. L’exemple de Mélampous”, *Les Études Classiques* 60 (1992) 3-21.

²¹ Polyidos and Koiranos: *Iliad* V.148 + scholion (king), XIII. 566-70 with R. Janko ad loc.; Pindar, *O* 13.74f; Pherecydes, *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (= FGrH) 3 F 115; Sophocles, *Manteis* with S. Radt ad loc.; Pausanias 1.43.5; Apollodorus 3.3.1. Koiranos’ etymology: A. Heubeck, “Koiranos, korragos und Verwandtes”, *Würzburger Jahrbücher für die Altertumswissenschaft* NF 4 (1978) 91-8.

²² Anios: *LIMC* I.1 (1981) 793f (Ph. Bruneau); *SEG* 32.218.41, 80; A.D. Tren dall, “The Daughters of Anios”, in E. Böhr and W. Martini (eds), *Studien zu Mythologie und Vasenmalerei* (Mainz, 1986) 165-8. Mounichos: Antoninus Liberalis 14. Teneros: Schol. Lycophron 1211; Schol. Pindar. *P*. 11.5. Phineus: A. Kisslinger, *Phineus* (Diss. Vienna, 1940); P.E. Arias, *Gnomon* 52 (1980) 537. Note also Polybius 34.2.6 on Danaus and Atreus as kings and seers.

²³ Evolutionism: Halliday (n. 6), 125. Frazer: see now the biography by R. Ackerman, *J.G. Frazer: His Life and Work* (Cambridge, 1987).

²⁴ Melampus’ kinship late: Dowden (n. 20), 111-3. Melampodids: I. Löfller, *Die Melampodie: Versuch einer Rekonstruktion des Inhalts* (Meisenheim, 1963); Kett, *Prosopographie*, 94-6.

²⁵ I owe the notion of “symbolic capital” to Pierre Bourdieu, see his *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge, 1977) 171-83. Richard Gordon, in M. Beard & J. North (eds), *Pagan Priests* (London, 1990) 194 wrongly suggests that Bourdieu has stopped using this notion, see his *In Other Words* (Cambridge, 1990) 134-9.

²⁶ Cf. Carlier, *La royauté en Grèce avant Alexandre* (Strassburg, 1974) 130-2 (Mycenean times), 162-5 (Homer), 178-94 (political position); C. Auffarth, *Der drohende Untergang. „Schöpfung“ in Mythos und Ritual im Alten Orient und in Griechenland* (Berlin and New York, 1991) 154-201 (archaic Greek king). Dreams: *Iliad* II.80-2; see also Ovid, *Met.* 11.644f; Artemidorus 1.2; Macrobius, *Somn. Scip.* 1.3.15.

²⁷ Basileus: R. Janko, *The Iliad: A Commentary* IV (Cambridge, 1992) 118 *reg; E. Benveniste, *Le vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes* II (Paris, 1969) 9-15, who wrongly concludes on the basis of the linguistic discontinuity that there was a radical discontinuity on the institutional level.

²⁸ Pythioi: Herodotus 6.57.2-4; Xenophon, *Rep. Lac.* 15.5; Cicero, *Div.* 1.43.95; Suda s.v. Poithioi; Carlier, *Royauté*, 268f; Robert Parker, “Spartan Religion”, in A. Powell (ed), *Classical Sparta: Techniques behind Her Success* (London, 1989, 142-72) 154f.

²⁹ Cf. Plutarch, *Agis* 9, *Cleomenes* 11.3-6, *Agis and Cleomenes* 28.3; Cicero, *Div.* 1.96; *Inscriptiones Graecae* V.1.1317; Tertullian, *De anima* 46; F. Jacoby on *Anonymoi* FGrH 596 F. 46.

³⁰ Grave: Epimenides FGrH 457 T 5 (and Addendum) with F. Jacoby ad loc. (competition); Sosibius FGrH 595 F 15; Pausanias 3.11.11. “Skin”: Diogenianus 8.28. Oracle scrolls: Euripides fr. 627; schol. *Iliad* 1.175; Diogenianus 3.2; Zenobius 4.11; Burkert (n. 14), 33-5. *Diphtherai*; Burkert, ibidem; O. Panagl, “Griechisch *diphthera*”, in W. Meid and H. Schmeja (eds), *Philologie und Sprachwissenschaft* (Innsbruck, 1983) 185-94; curiously, the word still survives in the Turkish *defter* (“document”), G.L. Huxley, *Proc. Royal Irish Ac.* 81, C, no. 13 (1981) 338f.

³¹ Athens: I am indebted to R. Garland, “Priests and Power in Classical Athens”, in Beard and North, *Pagan Priests*, 73-91, although he has insufficiently thought out his own ideas. Pisistratus: Suda s.v. *Bakis*; scholion Aristophanes, *Pax* 1071, cf. W. Burkert, in D. Hellholm (ed), *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East* (Tübingen, 1989²) 248f.

³² Hippias and Hipparchus: Herodotus 5.93, 7.6; H.A. Shapiro, “Oracle-mongers in Peisistratid Athens”, *Kernos* 3 (1990) 335-45. Grandson: Meiggs and Lewis, *Greek Historical Inscriptions*, no. 11 (ca. 521 B.C.); Thucydides 6.54.6.

³³ Cleomenes: Herodotus 5.90. Oracles: Demosthenes 21.51-4, 43.66.

³⁴ New priesthoods: S.C. Humphreys, *Anthropology and the Greeks* (London, 1978) 254. Written oracles: Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 117. Cimon: Plutarch, *Cimon* 18, Alcibiades: Plutarch, *Nicias* 13.1.

³⁵ Lampon: Kett, *Prosopographie*, 54-7 (all details); for an interesting suggestion see also F. Graf, *Eleusis und die orphische Dichtung Athens in vorhellenistischer Zeit* (Berlin and New York, 1974) 189f.

³⁶ Cf. R. Parker, “Greek States & Greek Oracles”, in P.A. Cartledge and F.D. Harvey (eds), *Crux. Essays presented to G.E.M. de Ste. Croix* (London, 1985, 298-326) 320.

³⁷ Tragedy and comedy: L. Radermacher, “Euripides und die Mantik”, *Rheinisches Museum* NF 53 (1898) 497-510; M. Casevitz, “Les devins des tragiques”, in P. Ghiron-Bistagne (ed), *Tragé et théâtre = Cahiers du GITA* 4 (Montpellier, 1988) 115-29 Thucydides: K.J. Dover, *The Greeks and Their Legacy* (Oxford, 1988) 72. Aristophanes: N.D. Smith, “Diviners and Divination in Aristophanic Comedy”, *Classical Antiquity* 8 (1989) 140-58.

³⁸ Cf. J.D. Mikalson, *Athenian Popular Religion* (Chapel Hill, 1983) 48.

³⁹ Men: Sophocles, fr. 59 and S. Radt *ad loc.* (also for the lexicographical tradition); Aristophanes, *Wasps* 1019 + scholion; Plato, *Sophistes* 252C + scholion; Plutarch, *Mor.* 414E; Clement of Alexandria, *Protr.* 2.11.2. Women: Hippocrates, *Epid.* 5.63, 7.28; Philochorus FGrH 328 F 78; E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1951) 71f; Graf, *Nordionische Kulte*, 348.

⁴⁰ Aristandros: Kett, *Prosopographie*, 25-9. Telmessos: D. Harvey, “Herodotus I, 78 and 84: Which Telmessos?”, *Kernos* 4 (1991) 245-58. Anatolia and seers: R. Lebrun, “Quelques aspects de la divination en Anatolie du sud-ouest”, *Kernos* 3 (1990) 185-95.

⁴¹ We do not yet have a good analysis of this development but see the inspiring study by S.C. Humphreys, “Die Dynamik des griechischen Durchbruchs”, in S.N. Eisenstadt (ed), *Kulturen der Achsenzeit* I (Frankfurt/M., 1987) 128-60.

⁴² For a survey of the shifting paradigms concerning prophecy in the course of history see W. Baumgartner, *Zum Alten Testament und seiner Umwelt* (Leiden, 1959) 27-41 (“Die Auffassungen des 19. Jahrhunderts vom israelitischen Prophetismus”); F.E. Deist, “The prophets: are we heading for a paradigm switch?”, in V. Fritz *et al.* (eds), *Prophet und Prophetenbuch. Festschrift für Otto Kaiser* (Berlin and New York, 1989) 1-18. For the individual prophets I refer to the excellent bibliographies in A.S. van der Woude (ed), *The World of the Old Testament = Bible Handbook*, Vol. II (Grand Rapids, 1989).

⁴³ The growing realisation of this Greek debt is due to the work of Walter Burkert, see his *Orientalisierende Epoche* (n. 14), 43-84; *Entretiens Hardt* XXXV (Geneva, 1990) 37 and “Apollon von Didyma und Olbia”, *Vestnik Drevnej Istorii*, 1990, no. 2, 1-7.

⁴⁴ Cf. E. Jenni (ed), *Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament* II (Munich

and Zürich, 1976) 7-26 (J. Jeremias); G.J. Botterweck *et al.* (eds), *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament* V (Stuttgart, 1986) 140-63 (H.-P. Müller).

⁴⁵ Cf. R.R. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia, 1980) 139-40 (*ro'eh*), 254-6 (*hozeh*).

⁴⁶ Cf. E. Fascher, *Prophetes* (Giessen, 1927); E. Fraenkel on Aeschylus, *Ag.* 1099; G. Kittel (ed), *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* VI (Stuttgart, 1959) 781-863.

⁴⁷ A. Blok, *Wittgenstein en Elias* (Amsterdam, 1976) argues the case for the application of Wittgenstein's insights to anthropology.

⁴⁸ Cf. K. van der Toorn, "L'oracle de victoire comme expression prophétique", *Revue Biblique* 94 (1987, 63-97) 70f. See also the observations by A. Pinero, "A Mediterranean View of Prophetic Inspiration: On the Concept of Inspiration in the *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicalium* by Pseudo-Philo", *Mediterranean Historical Review* 6 (1991) 5-34.

⁴⁹ Cf. H. Weippert, "Das deuteronomistische Geschichtswerk: sein Ziel und Ende in der neueren Forschung", *Theologische Rundschau* 50 (1985) 213-49; M.A. O'Brien, *The Deuteronomistic History Hypothesis: A Reassessment* (Freiburg and Göttingen, 1989).

⁵⁰ For an interesting but too sceptical attempt at rethinking the many problems of Israel's history by taking into account the new archeological model see N.P. Lemche, *Ancient Israel. A New History of Israelite Society* (Sheffield, 1988); Ph.R. Davies, *In Search of 'Ancient Israel'* (Sheffield, 1992).

⁵¹ Müller (n. 44), 143; L.M. Muntingh, "Second Thoughts on Ebla and the Old Testament", in W. Claassen (ed), *Text and Context. Old Testament and Semitic Studies for F.C. Fensham* (Sheffield, 1988, 175-75) 169f.

⁵² Cf. N. Shupah, "Egyptian 'prophecy' and biblical prophecy. Did the phenomenon of prophecy, in the biblical sense, exist in ancient Egypt?", *Jaarbericht Ex Oriente Lux* 31 (1989-90) 5-40.

⁵³ Hittites and Assyrians: M. Weippert, "Aspekte israelitischer Prophetie im Lichte verwandter Erscheinungen des Alten Orients", in G. Mauer and U. Magen (eds), *Ad bene et fideliter seminandum, Festgabe für Karlheinz Deller* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1988) 287-319; M. de Jong Ellis, "Observations on Mesopotamian Oracles and Prophetic Texts: Literary and Historiographic Considerations", *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 41 (1989) 127-186; for prophetesses in thirteenth-century Emar see now A. Tsukimoto, "Emar and the Old Testament", *Annual of the Japanese Biblical Institute* 15 (1989, 3-24) 4f. Mari: A. Malamat, *Mari and the Early Israelite Experience* (Oxford, 1989) 79-96 (with extensive bibliography).

⁵⁴ For an interesting, if not unambitious, attempt at reconstructing this prehistory see K. van der Toorn, "From Patriarchs to Prophets. A Reappraisal of Charismatic Leadership in Ancient Israel", *J. of Northwest Semitic Languages* 13 (1987) 191-218; more reticent, J.R. Porter, "The Origins of Prophecy in Israel", in R. Coggins *et al.* (eds), *Israel's Prophetic Tradition. Essays in Honour of Peter R. Ackroyd* (Cambridge, 1982) 12-31.

⁵⁵ Cross: see his *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, Mass., 1973) 223. For an excellent, compact survey of the sources see C.H.J. de Geus, "Bronnen voor onze kennis van de vroeg-Israëlitische staat", in H.J.M. Claessen and J.G. Oosten (eds), *Bronnen van macht* (Leiden, 1987) 57-67.

⁵⁶ M. Weber, *Das antike Judentum* (1917-19; 1921) = *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssociologie* III, ed. Marianne Weber (Tübingen, 1921) 1-442.

⁵⁷ "Männerhaus": Weber, *Das antike Judentum*, 51, 53. Anthropology and the

Old Testament: *Semeia* 21 (1981: special issue); Wilson (n. 5); Lang (n. 5); J.W. Rogerson, "Anthropology and The Old Testament", in R.E. Clements (ed), *The World of Ancient Israel* (Cambridge, 1989) 17-37.

⁵⁸ Cf. W. Schluchter (ed), *Max Webers Studie über das antike Judentum* (Frankfurt/M, 1981), of which the introduction has been reprinted in Schluchter, *Religion und Lebensführung II* (Frankfurt/M, 1988) 127-96; B. Lang, "Max Weber und die Propheten", *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 36 (1984) 156-65; C. Schäfer-Lichtenberger, "The Pariah: Some Thoughts on the Genesis and Presuppositions of Max Weber's *Ancient Judaism*", *J. Study of the Old Testament* 51 (1991) 85-113.

⁵⁹ Cf. A. Momigliano, *Sesto contributo alla storia degli studi classici e del mondo antico I* (Rome, 1980) 285-93; F.H. Tenbruck, "Max Weber und Eduard Meyer", in W.J. Mommsen and J. Osterhammel (eds), *Max Weber and his Contemporaries* (London, 1987) 234-67; J. Deininger, "Eduard Meyer und Max Weber", in W.M. Calder III and A. Demandt (eds), *Eduard Meyer: Leben und Leistung eines Universalhistorikers* (Leiden, 1990) 132-58; W. Nippel, "Max Weber, Eduard Meyer und die 'Kulturgeschichte'", in M. Hettling *et al.* (eds), *Was ist Gesellschaftsgeschichte?* (Munich, 1991) 323-30.

⁶⁰ Development: C. Grottanelli, "Possessione carismatica e razionalizzazione statale nella bibbia ebraica", *Studi Storico-Religiosi* 1 (1977) 263-88. Africa: M.F.C. Bourdillon, "Oracles and politics in Ancient Israel", *Man* 12 (1977) 124-40.

⁶¹ On the rise of Jahweh as Israel's central god see now the interesting but speculative study by J.C. de Moor, *The Rise of Jahwism* (Louvain, 1990).

⁶² Technique: see my *The Early Greek Concept of the Soul* (Princeton, 1983) 39. For a balanced evaluation of recent insights concerning prophetic possession see P. Michaelsen, "Ecstasy and Possession in Ancient Israel", *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*, no. 2 (1989) 28-54. Saul's rise: see most recently P.M. Arnold, *Gibeah. The Search for a Biblical City* (Sheffield, 1990) 27-30, 88-97; D. Vihander Edelman, *King Saul in the Historiography of Judah* (Sheffield, 1991). Queens: note also the disapproving attitude of Michal, Saul's daughter, toward David's dancing before the Ark (*II Samuel* 6).

⁶³ Gad and Nathan: Wilson, *Prophecy and Society*, 263-5; G.H. Jones, *The Nathan Narratives* (Sheffield, 1990: rather speculative); M. Bar-Ilan, "The Date of The Words of Gad the Seer", *J. of Biblical Literature* 109 (1990) 475-92.

⁶⁴ Ahiah: *I Kings* 11, vgl. D.G. Schley, *Shiloh. A Biblical City in Tradition and History* (Sheffield, 1989) 165-7. Semaiah: *I Kings* 12.

⁶⁵ Elijah: *I Kings* 17-21; *II Kings* 1-2; most recently, A.J. Hauser & R. Gregory, *From Carmel to Horeb. Elijah in Crisis* (Sheffield, 1990). Elisha: *II Kings* 2-8; R.D. Moore, *God saves. Lessons from the Elisha Stories* (Sheffield, 1990). Bethel: E.J. Ziolkowski, "The Bad Boys of Bethel", *History of Religion* 30 (1991) 331-58.

⁶⁶ Hazael: H. Kyrieleis and W. Röllig, "Ein altorientalischer Pferdeschmuck aus dem Heraion von Samos", *Athenische Mitteilungen* 103 (1988) 37-75. Balaam: the exact language of the inscription is still a subject for discussion, see M.S. Moore, *The Balaam Traditions* (Atlanta, 1990); J. Hoftijzer and G. van der Kooij (eds), *The Balaam Text from Deir 'Alla Re-evaluated* (Leiden, 1991).

⁶⁷ Cf. B. Lang, *Monotheism and the Prophetic Minority* (Sheffield, 1983) 68; C.H.J. de Geus, "Wie waren de profeten?", in F. García Martínez *et al.* (eds), *Profeten en profetische geschriften* (Kampen and Nijkerk, 1985) 20-7.

⁶⁸ P. Brown, *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (London, 1982) 103-65.

⁶⁹ Weber: *Antikes Judentum*, 300. For the political activity of prophets see the

critique on Weber by Lang (n. 67); Van der Toorn (n. 54); J. Hogenhaven, "Prophecy and Propaganda. Aspects of Political and Religious Reasoning in Israel and the Ancient Near East", *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* no. 1 (1989) 125-41. Wellhausen: see most recently *Semeia* 25 (1982: special issue); W.M. Calder III and R.L. Fowler, *The Preserved Letters of Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff to Eduard Schwartz* (Munich, 1986) 78-84; R. Smend, *Deutsche Altestamentler in drei Jahrhunderten* (Göttingen, 1989) 99-113 and *Epochen der Bibelkritik* (Munich, 1991) 168-215.

⁷⁰ Literacy: D.W. Jameson-Drake, *Scribes and Schools in Monarchic Judah* (Sheffield, 1991). Call: *Amos* 7.14v; *Isaiah* 6; *Jeremiah* 1; *Ezekiel* 1-3, cf. J. Lindblom, *Prophecy in Ancient Israel* (Oxford, 1962) 182-97. For resistance against the call, as in the case of Jeremiah, see J.N. Bremmer and N.M. Horsfall, *Roman Myth and Mythography* (London, 1987) 105-11.

⁷¹ Hecataeus FGrH 264 F 6, cf. A. Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom* (Cambridge, 1975) 84. Hecataeus' likely stay in Sparta has been neglected in the debates about the contacts between Jews and Spartans in Hellenistic times. For an excellent bibliography of these debates see C. Orrieux, "La 'parenté' entre Juifs et Spartiates", in R. Lonis, *L'Étranger dans le monde grec* (Nancy, 1987) 169-91 (with thanks to Hans Teitler); add now O. Curly. "A propos de la parenté entre Juifs et Spartiates", *Historia* 41 (1992) 245-8.

⁷² Mary Douglas: see for her ever-changing views J.V. Spickard, "A guide to Mary Douglas's versions of grid/group theory", *Sociological Analysis* 50 (1989) 151-70.

⁷³ The historiography of the latter history of prophecy is hampered by lack of data, but see Lang, *Monotheism and the Prophetic Minority*, 138-56; J. Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel: From the Settlement in the Land to the Hellenistic Period* (London, 1984), and J. Barton, *Oracles of God. Perceptions of Ancient Prophecy in Israel after the Exile* (London, 1986). John Hyrcanus: Flavius Josephus *Antiquitates* 13.299f and *Bellum Judaicum* 1.68f.

⁷⁴ For this short sketch I use P. Alphandéry, "Prophètes et ministère prophétique dans le moyen-âge latin", *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses* 1932, 334-59; R.W. Southern, "Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing: 3. History as Prophecy", *Transactions Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, 22 (1972) 159-80; M.E. Reeves, "History and Prophecy in Medieval Thought", *Medievalia et Humanistica* 5 (1974) 51-75.

⁷⁵ Pseudo-Methodius: G.J. Reinink, "Der edessenische 'Pseudo-Methodius'", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 83 (1990) 31-45. Leo: M. Reeves, "Some Popular Prophecies from the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Centuries", in G.J. Cumming and D. Baker (eds), *Popular Belief and Practice* (Cambridge, 1972) 107-34; C. Mango, *Byzantium and its Image* (London, 1984) Ch. XVI and Addenda; A. Deisser, "Les oracles de Léon VI le Sage", *Kernos* 3 (1990) 135-45.

⁷⁶ Pagan and Christian *Oracula Sibyllina*: see D. Potter, *J. of Roman Archaeology* 3 (1900) 471, for an excellent bibliography; add A. Momigliano, "From the Pagan to the Christian Sibyl: Prophecy as History of Religion", in A.C. Dionisotti et al. (eds), *The Uses of Greek and Latin* (London, 1988) 3-18. Jewish: A. Chester, "The Sibyl and the Temple", in W. Horbury (ed), *Templum amicitiae. Essays on the Second Temple presented to Ernst Bammel* (Sheffield, 1991) 37-69 (with up-to-date bibliography). Middle Ages: B. McGinn, "Teste David cum Sibylla: the significance of the sibylline tradition in the Middle Ages", in J. Kirshner and S.F. Wemple, *Women of the Medieval World* (Oxford, 1985) 7-35; P. Dronke, *Hermes and the Sibyls. Continuations and Creations* (Cambridge, 1990).

⁷⁷ Cf. K. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London, 1971) 467; J. Ziolkowski, "The Nature of Prophecy in Geoffrey Monmouth's *Vita Merlini*", in J. Kugel (ed), *Poetry and Prophecy* (Ithaca and London, 1990) 151-62, 240-4; H. Beckers et al., *Der Rheinische Merlin* (Paderborn, 1991).

⁷⁸ Joachim: M. Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study in Joachimism* (Oxford, 1969) and *Joachim of Fiore and the Prophetic Future* (London, 1979). Joachim's refusal of the title of prophet: K.-V. Selge, "Eine Einführung Joachims von Fiore in die Johannesapokalypse", *Deutsches Archiv* 46 (1990, 85-131) 92; for parallels see R.E. Lerner, *The Powers of Prophecy. The Cedar of Lebanon. Vision from the Mongol Onslaught to the Dawn of the Enlightenment* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1983) 184.

⁷⁹ For an important survey of astrology see S.J. Tester, *A History of Western Astrology* (Bury St. Edmunds, 1987); add V. Flint, "The Transmission of Astrology in the Early Middle Ages", *Viator* 21 (1990) 1-27.

⁸⁰ Cf. Symon de Phares, *Receuil des plus célèbres astrologues et quelques hommes doctes*, ed. E. Wickersheimer (Paris, 1929) passim; J.S.P. Tatlock, *The Legendary History of Britain* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1950) 368 (England); D. Kurtze, *Johannes Lichtenberger. Eine Studie zur Geschichte der Prophetie und Astrologie* (Lübeck, 1960: on the court astrologer of the emperor Frederick III).

⁸¹ Cf. T.O. Wedel, "The Medieval Attitude towards Astrology", *Yale Studies in English* 60 (New Haven, 1920).

⁸² Italy: G. Zarri, "Pietà e profezia alle corte padane: le pie consigliere dei principi", in *Il Rinascimento nelle corti padane* (Bari, 1977) 201-37; A. Prosperi, "Dalle 'divine madri' ai 'padri spirituali'", in E. Schulte van Kessel (ed), *Women and Men in spiritual culture* (The Hague, 1986) 71-90. Spain: J. Bilinkoff, "A Spanish Prophetess and Her Patrons: The Case of María de Santo Domingo", *Sixteenth Century Journal* 23 (1992) 21-34. Lateran council: *Conciliorum oecumenicorum decreta* (Basel, 1962) 610-4.

⁸³ Cf. O. Niccoli, *Prophecy and People in Renaissance Italy* (Princeton, 1990) 189-196.

⁸⁴ The exception is the pious Philip IV (1605-65) of Spain, who kept contact with "divine madri", cf. R. Cueto Ruiz, "La tradición profética en la monarquía católica en los siglos 15, 16, y 17", *Arquivos do centro cultural português* 17 (1982) 411-44; J. Pérez Villanueva, *Felipe IV y Luisa Enríquez Manrique de Lara, Condesa de Paredes de Nava* (Salamanca, 1986).

⁸⁵ Cf. R.E. Lerner, "Medieval Prophecy and Religious Dissent", *Past and Present*, no. 72 (1976) 3-24.

⁸⁶ This is rightly observed by R. Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Frankfurt/M, 1979) 26.

⁸⁷ This interpretation of prophecy spread from Zurich to England and Holland, cf. A.C. Fix, *Prophecy and Reason: The Dutch Collegiants in the Early Enlightenment* (Princeton, 1991) 164-9.

⁸⁸ Luther: P. Glaser, *Hundert vnd zwanzig Prophecyunge, oder Weissagung, des Ehrwürdigen Vaters Herrn Doctoris Martini Luthers* (Eisleben, 1557) and *Zwey Hundert Prophecyunge oder weissagunge, des teurwn Mans D. Martini Lutheri* (Bautzen, 1574). Lutherans: R.B. Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis. Apocalypticism in the Wake of the Lutheran Reformation* (Stanford, 1988).

⁸⁹ Cf. Thomas, *Religion*, 151-78, 252-300, 335-424; see now also S.L. Jansen, *Political Protest and Prophecy under Henry VIII* (Cambridge, 1991).

⁹⁰ For executions of prophets in England and Elisabeth's law see the still infor-

mative study by G.L. Kittredge, *Witchcraft in Old and New England* (Cambridge, Mass., 1929) 226-31.

⁹¹ See the fascinating study by R.L. Kagan, *Lucrecia's Dreams. Politics and Prophecy in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford, 1990).

⁹² Cf. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, 164-71; B.S. Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men: a study in seventeenth-century English millenarism* (London, 1972); K.R. Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain, 1530-1645* (Oxford, 1979).

⁹³ Cf. W. Frijhoff, "Prophétie et société dans les Provinces-Unies aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles", in M.-S. Dupont-Bouchat, W. Frijhoff, R. Muchembled, *Prophètes et sorciers dans les Pays-Bas, XVIe-XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1978) 263-362. See also his "Katholieke toekomstverwachting ten tijde van de Republiek: structuur, en grondlijnen tot een interpretatie", *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 98 (1983) 430-59 and "The Meaning of the Marvelous: on religious experience in the early seventeenth-century Netherlands", in L. Laeyendecker et al. (eds), *Experiences and Explanations: historical and sociological essays on religion in everyday life* (Leeuwarden, 1990) 79-101.

⁹⁴ Rome: J. Doignon, "Oracles, prophéties, 'on dit' sur la chute de Rome (395-410). Les réactions de Jérôme et d'Augustin", *Revue des études Augustiniennes* 36 (1990) 120-46, Frisia: P. Winsemius, *Cronique ofte historische geschiedenis van Vrieslant* (Franeker, 1952) 189, 201, 20df., 227; A. Campbell (ed), *Thet Freske Riün. Tractatus Alvini* (The Hague, 1952) 158-63.

⁹⁵ Censorship: C. Hill, *Collected Essays I* (Brighton, 1985) 33-71. Philosophers: Thomas, *Religion*, 172-3. Newton: R.S. Westfall, *Never at Rest. A Biography of Isaac Newton* (Cambridge, 1980) 317-50, 815-9 (with thanks to Klaas van Berkel).

⁹⁶ Prophecy: Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis*, 228-60. Warner: R. Haase, *Das Problem des Chiliasmus und der Dreissigjährige Krieg* (Leipzig, 1933) 70-8; W. Peuckert, "Deutsche Volkspropheten", *Zs. f. d. alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* NF 12 (1935) 35-54. Newspaper: P. Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (London, 1978) 262-3.

⁹⁷ Printing press: J. Bossey, *Christianity in the West* (Oxford, 1985) 99-101. Sibyl: A. Grafton, *Defenders of the Text. The Tradition of Scholarship in an Age of Science, 1450-1800* (Cambridge, Mass., 1991) 172-5.

⁹⁸ Cf. Thomas, *Religion*, 342-7. Lucrezia also dreams that Philip II consults her as astrologer: Kagan, *Lucrecia's Dreams*, 74.

⁹⁹ Changes: Thomas, *Religion*, 414-24; P. Curry, *Prophecy and Power: Astrology in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1989) 44-91. Hazard: M. Jacob, "The Crisis of the European Mind: Hazard Revisited", in P. Mack and M. Jacob (eds), *Politics and Culture in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1987) 251-71. Charles II: C.H. Hartman, *Charles II and Madame* (London, 1934) 239-41.

¹⁰⁰ Luther and astrology: P. Zambelli (ed), "Astrologi allucinati" (Berlin, 1986). Convergence: Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis*, 141-81. In France the Catholic church also tried to control astrology: D. Crouzet, "La Représentation du temps à l'époque de la Ligue", *Revue Historique* 270 (1983, 297-388) 307.

¹⁰¹ See most recently H. Schwartz, *The French Prophets: The History of a Millenarian Group in Eighteenth-Century England* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1980); F.R.J. Knetsch, "Der Prophetismus in den Cevennen nach 1685. Die Geschichte einiger ekstatischer Aussenseiter", in U. Gäbler and P. Schram (eds), *Erweckung am Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Amsterdam, 1986) 45-58.

¹⁰² France: T.A. Kselman, *Miracles & Prophecies in Nineteenth-Century France* (New Brunswick, 1983). Nostradamus: A. Hübscher, *Die grosse Weissagung* (Munich,

1952) 155; E. Howe, *Astrology and the Third Reich* (Wellingborough, 1984) 155 (this book also appeared under the titles of *Urania's Children* [London, 1967] and *Astrology: a recent history* [New York, 1968]). Howe shows that the Germans were also interested in astrological predictions.

¹⁰³ See the memoirs of Reagan's chief of staff and of his wife: D.T. Regan, *For the Record: From Wall Street to Washington* (New York, 1988) and Nancy Reagan, *My Turn* (New York, 1989).

¹⁰⁴ For the relationship between the kings and the prophets see now also D.C. Benjamin, "An Anthropology of Prophecy", *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 21 (1991) 135-44.

¹⁰⁵ Bourdieu, *In Other Words*, 134.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. M. Spiro, "Religion: problems of definition and explanation", in M. Banton (ed), *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion* (London, 1972); C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York, 1973); Th.P. van Baaren and H.J.W. Drijvers (eds), *Religion, Culture and Methodology* (The Hague and Paris, 1973).

¹⁰⁷ For this distinction see W. Frijhoff, "Van 'histoire de l'église' naar 'histoire religieuse'", *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* 61 (1981) 113-53.

¹⁰⁸ This contribution is the somewhat revised and updated version of my inaugural lecture as professor of History of Religions at the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen on 4 June 1991. It is a pleasure to thank my brother Rolf, Ton Hilhorst and Yme Kuiper for their comments; Adam van der Woude for his scrutiny of the section on Israel; and Mirjam de Baar, John North and, especially, Willem Frijhoff for bibliographical assistance regarding early modern Europe. Dirk Obbink kindly corrected my English.

RELIGION CONFRONTS THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

EDWARD A. YONAN

Review article

ROBERT A. SEGAL, *Religion and the Social Sciences: Essays on the Confrontation.*

Atlanta: Scholars Press 1989 (184 p., index) ISBN 1-55540-295-X
\$43.95.

Very few recent books in the academic study of religion encompass the incisive terrain of scholarship and the methodological intersections of religion and the social sciences than Robert A. Segal's, *Religion and the Social Sciences: Essays on the Confrontation*. Segal brings together thirteen previously published articles (between 1976-87)¹ that are connected, revamped, and defended to support his argumentative thesis that the confrontation referred to in the title is not between religion and the social sciences. The real confrontation exists between religious studies and the social sciences.

Religionists pursue and defend religious studies, according to Segal, and hence the chief logical objection argued for in the book is the problematic identification of religion with religious studies. Once that problematic identification is exposed, religionists defending religious studies against the challenges of the social sciences (1) deny that the social sciences deal at all with religion by (2) further denying the social sciences can explain religion. Since (3) the truth of religion is beyond social scientific explanation, (4) religion can only be interpreted and understood in irreducibly religious ways. Therefore, (5) only religionists can affirm and account for the religiosity, irreducibility, and autonomy of religion. Claims (1) to (5) are construed by Segal to provide the (not always consistent) religionist rejoinder to the social scientific challenge.

The thirteen essays in the book deal explicitly and in some cases implicitly with claims (1) to (5). Segal presents the social scientific side of the confrontation with religious studies through (1) paradigm case analyses of the social scientific approach, (2) methodological oppositions of that approach to religionist ones, and (3) arguments he develops for the cogency of the social scientific approach to religion. This context of the confrontation provides Segal with an analytical framework for focusing on

several major theoretical, methodological, and empirical issues as "reductionism", "explanation", "understanding", "interpretation", "theory", "myth-ritual", "belief", "sacred-secular", "origin-function-meaning-truth", "relativism", etc., that generate and invite terminological and substantive discussions and clarifications in virtually all of the essays in the book. This same context of confrontation is enlarged to include scholars who have engaged Segal in published discussions and clarifications that are included in the addendum to his essays, for example, "In Defense of Reductionism" and "Interpreting and Explaining Religion". Almost without exception, these discussions and extended clarifications give a reader a clearer sense of Segal's conceptual style of developing arguments and counter-arguments, affirmations and negations, confrontations and resolutions that are advanced in dealing with the spectrum of topics considered in and through these essays that present his position in clear, incisive, and reasonably complete form. For precisely these reasons, the remainder of this review will be devoted entirely to the first article since the others that follow are shaped and influenced (in so many ways) by it.

The first essay, "In Defense of Reductionism," presents Segal's first confrontation (in a sequence of several) between religious studies and the social sciences over the problem of reductionism. Religionists who follow the paradigm example of Mircea Eliade argue against and reject the reductive explanations of the social sciences. The religionists' defense of nonreductionism, Segal argues, rests on their claims that (1) religion is understood and enforced from the believer's irreducible point of view rooted in the sacred, that (2) religion is a *sui generis* and autonomous domain of study, and (3) the truth of religion is beyond explanation. The comparative method, the process of *Verstehen*, and the phenomenological approach are described by Segal as three other possible (and in some ways questionable) defenses of nonreductionism. The nonreductionism that is ostensibly justified by these claims is positioned over against the reductionism entailed by some explanations of religion in the social sciences.

The reductionism of some (especially classical) social scientists, according to Segal, does not (1) remain content with the privileged access understanding of the believer's point of view, assume (2) that religion is just a *sui generis* and autonomous phenomenon, claim (3) that religion is only expressed through surface and manifest levels, declare (4) that reductive analyses are (theoretically) superior to nonreductive analyses of religion, and conclude (5) that the nonbeliever is excluded from interpreting and explaining religion on *a-priori* grounds. The reductionism that is empirically justified by these claims is defined, according to Segal, as an

explanation of religion that translates its manifest religious nature into something nonreligious in the context of any one of the social sciences. The classical social scientists (Émile Durkheim, A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, and Max Weber) as well as contemporaries (Clifford Geertz, Peter Berger, Victor Turner, Robert Bellah, and Mary Douglas) in the social sciences have, under Segal's stipulative definition, explained religion in nonreligious or secular terms. Therefore, reductive analyses of this kind have the (superior) pragmatic advantage over nonreductive ones in that one does not have to be a believer to accept the reductive ones. Presumably, the advantage of reductive analyses and explanations of the social scientists is that they account for more than the believer's point of view in the study of religion.

In this brief review it would be impossible to do justice to the other interrelated arguments (presented in essays that deal with history, sociology, psychology, and anthropology) that Segal develops in defense of his view of reductionism. Since this is a major argumentative topic throughout his book, I shall try to identify some of the important issues in his admirable discussion which require clearer and more explicit consideration. As the tone of my analysis (above) would suggest thus far, I am quite sympathetic with much of what Segal argues for, and hence my intent here is clarification and not confrontation.

First, does Segal's view of reductionism presuppose an explanatory model of reduction? From much of what he says about reductive explanations in the social sciences, one would get the distinct impression that indeed he is assuming and employing an explanatory model of reduction in his stipulative definition of reductionism. This impression is further reinforced by his references to the model of explanatory reduction found in the writings of Ernst Nagel (*The Structure of Science*, New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1961) and William C. Wimsatt ("Reduction and Reductionism." In *Current Research in Philosophy of Science*, eds. P.D. Asquith and H.E. Kyburg, pp. 352-77) where these philosophers of sciences define explanatory reduction as a reduction of theory T_2 by the reducing theory T_1 . What remains unclear in Segal's defense of reductionism is his analysis of how theories in religion (such as Eliade's and others) are reduced to one or more theories in the social sciences.

Second, if Segal's view of reductionism presupposes an explanatory model of reduction, and theory reduction specifically, then what view of explanation does he hold? Since he refers to several major works of Carl G. Hempel, one would assume he subscribes to a deductive nomological view of explanation. And yet one finds very little discussion (except for one paragraph on page 25 in the "In Defense of Reductionism" essay) of the Hempelian view of explanation.

Despite the above issues that deserve further clarification, it must be said that Segal has produced a rather impressive defense of reductive explanations of religion. His book is an admirable collection of essays that are tightly constructed and argued to illuminate the confrontations and intersections between religion and the social sciences.

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¹ *Contents:* Introduction; 1: In Defense of Reductionism; 2: Are Historians of Religions Necessarily Believers? 3: Mircea Eliade's Theory of Millenarianism; 4: Have the Social Sciences Been Converted? 5: Erik Erikson: Psychologist or Historian of Religions? 6: Interpreting and Explaining Religion: A Response to Blasi and Nelson; 7: The Social Sciences and the Truth of Religious Belief; 8: A Jungian View of Evil: A Review Essay of John Sanford's *Evil*; 9: Fustel de Coulanges: The First Modern Sociologist of Religion; 10: The "De-Sociologizing" of the Sociology of Religion; 11: Victor Turner's Theory of Ritual; 12: Symbolic Anthropology Applied to Religions of the Greco-Roman World; 13: Relativism and Rationality in the Social Sciences: A Review Essay of Lucien Lévy-Bruhl's *How Natives Think*.

BOOK REVIEWS

KURT RUDOLPH, *Geschichte und Probleme der Religionswissenschaft* (Studies in the History of Religions Vol. LIII) Leiden, New York, Köln: E.J. Brill 1992 (XVI + 443 p.) ISBN 90-04-09503-9 US\$125.75.

Well trained in the classical German tradition of *Religionswissenschaft*, Professor Rudolph has a key position in the mosaic of approaches which constitute the modern study of religion. As a searcher for objective historical knowledge, he sees the discipline as founded on historical, philological and sociological studies (p. XIII). He upheld this position in his own research and teaching under increasingly difficult conditions in Leipzig until 1983, eagerly following developments in the field in Western Europe and North America and making his own contributions to it as a specialist in the religions of the Ancient Near East and Late Antiquity.

The present book reflects developments in the discipline since 1945. The author describes them and takes issue with commonly accepted ideas and positions, critically exposing the results of modern scholarship. The collection of eighteen articles, previously published between 1965 and 1990, but here updated and in part expanded, allows the reader to discover the articulation of Professor Rudolph's own idea of *Religionswissenschaft* and to increase his or her knowledge under good guidance.

The book consists of four parts: I *Theorie und Methodologie* (*Religionswissenschaft* as a scholarly discipline); II *Terminologische Probleme* (development in the course of the history of religions, myth and demythologization, syncretism, the structure of sects; III *Zur Religionsgeschichte* (Muhammad, Judaism - Christianity - Islam, early Christianity); and IV *Zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte* (essays on the Leipzig "school" and some other prominent scholars and trends in the field). The book is a monument not only to the author's scholarship (though it represents only a small part of his total output), but also to our knowledge of the history of *Religionswissenschaft* since 1945, at least from the angle of historical scholarship.

Indeed, we have more to do here with the history and problems of a *history* of religions than with those of a *science* of religion, as the title suggests. Certain research topics which belong to the study of religion today remain outside the scope of this book, such as problems in the study of living religions (anthropological fieldwork), of religious meaning con-

structs (hermeneutics), and of communication between people from different religions and cultures (mutual perceptions and interaction). The author should be congratulated with the appearance of this book which testifies to the cause of historical scholarship in the field of religious studies.

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E.T. LAWSON and R.N. McCUALEY, *Rethinking Religion: Connecting Cognition and Culture*. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press 1990 (194 p.) ISBN 0 521 37370 0 (hardback) £32.50; ISBN 0 521 43806 3 (paperback 1992) £12.95.

This important book, and Pascal Boyer's recent article in this journal (39, 1: 27-57), are proof that a new explanatory approach to religion is being developed. It is the cognitive approach modelled after the transformational generative grammar pioneered by Chomsky in the study of languages and used more recently in psychological and anthropological studies on the acquisition of the cognitive skills that enable humans to act effectively as members of their societies and to judge intuitively whether they speak or behave in a correct way (61-77).

The heart of the book is chapter five (84-136) in which Lawson & McCauley outline their cognitive approach to religion in a formal theory of religious ritual systems, demonstrate its operation, and derive a system of universal principles of religious ritual from it. The theory consists of twenty seven formation rules (87-104), by which any religious ritual action may be analysed into its constituents, which are category symbols and action elements (87). The aim of such analysis is to arrive at correct descriptions of the depth structures of ritual actions, i.e. of the manner in which belief representations are embedded, in several successive layers, in the action elements, and to discern the rules of transformation by which these structures generate and constrain ritual behaviour. A major premise of the cognitive approach to ritual acts is that believers intuitively know whether a particular address of their postulated beings is correct, in the same manner as language speakers know whether a particular use of words is correct. Cognitive approaches not only aim to develop formal techniques of analysis by which the grammar governing such processes are discovered, but also to test the grammatical rules discovered by put-

ting speech, social or ritual action configurations, organised after these explicated rules, before speakers and actors who by virtue of their tacit intuitive knowledge can judge whether they are correct. The demonstration of this technique (pp. 96-121) is the most convincing and rewarding part of the book. On the strength of this part of the book, the cognitive approach to religious ritual behaviour seems to promise a marked addition to the analytic and explanatory powers of the science of religions. However, as the method presupposes familiarity with several disciplines and skills in which most scholars of religions have not been trained, mastering it requires quite hard work.

The authors not only deserve praise for blazing this new trail. They also merit blame for the dust they raise in blazing it. Chapters one to four are polemical preliminaires on methodological battles in the disciplines engaged in the study of religions. In chapter one (12-31) various positions are discussed as to whether religion should be described only, or only be explained, or be both described and explained. The authors argue for the last position and for an 'interactionist' version of it, in which neither description nor explanation are subordinated to the other. Three earlier interactionist approaches, the intellectualist, the symbolist and structuralist ones, are discussed in chapter two (32-44), after which, in chapter three (45-59), approaches are discussed which study ritual as language: Ray's performative approach, Leach's communicative approach, and Staal's syntactic approach. The authors take their inspiration, however, in chapter four (60-83), from the 'competence approach to theorizing' as developed by Chomsky, who holds that evolution has structured the human brain in such a way that man can easily and quickly acquire the cognitive skills required for speaking a language competently, and creatively, and that these largely unconscious skills endow the native speaker of a language with a 'competence to theorize' about the correctness of novel language use.

The authors would have done their colleagues in the study of religions a greater service if, in stead of confusing methodological battles, they had presented a well-structured introduction to the terms, theories and developments in disciplines which are essential for the comprehension of the research method they propose. The book as it is will, I fear, be laid aside by many as beyond their ken. Many will get lost long before page 104 where those who have struggled on being able to reap the rewards of their toils. The plague of half-explained polemics also haunts chapter six (137-169) in which the authors attack the semantic theories of ritual behaviour proposed by Staal and Sperber and 'extensionalist semantics'.

The final chapter (170-184), however, comes as an anti-climax. In view of the assertive spirit of the book, it ends with quite modest claims. Refus-

ing to go along with Chomsky's innate biological constraints, the authors feel forced to look for the explanation of the uniformities in ritual behaviour in the 'awkwardly familiar' quarters of the influences which social and cultural forces exert on them (181). Implying that human cognitive skills are 'overwhelmingly socio-cultural in origin', they suggest that the cognitive approach serves 'to bootstrap up from the psychological to the socio-cultural' (182). One must 'sneak up to symbolic-cultural systems' by way of a cognitive approach because the 'socio-cultural systems have no way of being directly observed. We see them through a glass darkly in the mirror of the mind'. (183).

Two points in conclusion. The authors deduce from their first universal principle of religious ritual, that of superhuman agency, that 'the basic action structure of all religious rituals involves an object of ritual action', always has an instrumental dimension, and at least indirectly involves the action of a superhuman agent (125, 165, cf. also 92). A prayer to a god, though a religious action, is therefore not a ritual in their analysis (125), though an offering to a god is (134). I submit that this is contradicted by their canon, the tacit knowledge of the idealised participant, in most religions, not only e.g. that of the Yoruba believers addressing prayers of praise to Olorun who is believed never to intervene in human affairs (14), but also in e.g. Christianity in which prayer is, or was, virtually the central rite, which has models for it in the prayer practice accorded to its founder, and in which the charismatic/pentecostal groups practise *gebedsgenezing*, healing by [ecstatic] prayer [sessions]. Lastly, though in the past the older *Rituale Romanum* had the priest assisting at a marriage pronounce: *Ego te coniungo*, 'I conjoin [the two of] you [in matrimony], R.C. doctrine holds that the priest only assists at the marriage of two baptized Christians who themselves bring about their marriage by their public assent to it before an ordained priest. A marriage before a pseudopriest (165) may, therefore, be considered invalid because the proper form, requiring that the assent be spoken before a validly ordained person, has not been observed, not because that pseudo-priest cannot conclude the marriage. For it is not the priest who concludes the marriage, but those who contract and consummate it.

The paperback edition announced is welcome. It would be a greater boon, however, if it were printed in a fatter font than the hardback, the small and thin characters of which are quite hard upon anyone with less than optimal eyesight.

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FRANK REYNOLDS and DAVID TRACY (Eds.), *Discourse and Practice* — Albany, NY: State University of New York Press 1992 (316 p.). ISBN 0-7914-1024-2 (pbk.) \$ 18.95.

Since 1986 the University of Chicago Divinity School has sponsored a series of conferences devoted to the restructuring of the philosophy of religion so as to allow it to take account not only of new developments in the field of philosophy but also of the new, philosophically significant materials which it is claimed have become available in comparative disciplines like anthropology and the history of religions. *Discourse and Practice* is one of several published volumes that present the papers delivered at those conferences. The papers here are devoted to arguing the case "...that any truly adequate comparative philosophy of religions must include a continuing effort to understand philosophical and religious practices ..., to understand the implicit metapractical orientations that are embedded in seemingly non-philosophical types of religious discourse, and to understand the explicit metapractical theories that come to the fore in more explicitly philosophical contexts" (3).

The three essays in section one are, each in its own way, concerned to show the limitations of conventional philosophies of religion. Fitz John Porter Poole maintains that a proper understanding of the ritual practice of the Bimin-Kuskusmin of Papua New Guinea reveals a complex philosophical kind of thought that ought to be taken seriously by modern philosophers of religion. Poole sees their thought as a type of mythicphilosophy in that it combines thinking and feeling into a unity and thinks it but an example of a legitimate cognitive-affective thinking (to be found in virtually all non-literate cultures), that can add much to the presently dominant Western style of philosophical thought. Matthew Kapstein similarly argues for a strong correlation between myth and philosophy. Narrative structures, he attempts to show, can encode profound philosophical truths which Western style philosophy or religion simply ignores. Francisca Cho Bantly, in the final paper in this section, also argues that "myth is just as capable of reasoned explanation as philosophy" (83). In an examination of the Korean novel *The Dream of the Nine Clouds* she maintains that the presumed gap between philosophy and fiction does not really exist because the novel, in a process of ontological deconstruction, actually embodies existential truth not available to traditional philosophical forms of thought.

In section two, essays by Philip L. Quinn on the relationship of morality to religion, and by Robin W. Lovin on myths of equality and inequality, though concerned with issues more familiar to Western

philosophers of religion, are essentially concerned to undermine traditional philosophical approaches to them and to show that a clearer understanding of the interrelations of myth, philosophy, and practice can be used to rationalize and justify practices at a variety of levels.

Section three contains three papers devoted essentially to comparative studies of philosophical import. Thomas P. Kasulis is concerned to explore the general role of philosophy within religion and he argues that “philosophy within a religious tradition can as readily reflect on the nature of the religion’s praxis as on its understanding of reality” (174). A philosophy of religion that fails to see that understanding a religion’s praxis is, in his opinion, as important to understanding it as is understanding its beliefs about reality. Robert F. Campany’s paper comparing Xunzi and Durkheim as theorists of ritual practice and Judith Berling’s paper on “embodiment philosophy” as seen from a Chinese perspective are both directed towards undermining the dominance of reason in western philosophy of religion. Berling in particular suggests that seeing how non-western modes of thought combine “living, practice, and human interaction as much as ... doctrine, argumentation, and systems of thought” (246) can enrich Western philosophy of religion by showing how philosophy can be embodied and “humanly modeled” (246).

Two papers constitute the final section entitled “Concluding Comparative Reflections.” William Schweiker’s contribution is an essay on understanding comparative ethics and in some sense traverses territory familiar from the essays in section two. Schweiker, somewhat more generally than the earlier essays however, attempts to delineate the conditions that make what he calls ‘comparative understanding’ possible. Richard J. Bernstein sounds a similar note in his essay on the “challenge and threat of Otherness.” Contemporary philosophy of religion, he argues here, simply must give “a prominent place to the historical and comparative study of religions” (299), if it is ever to exorcise, as he puts it, the Cartesian anxiety (309) that is still a blight to philosophy of religion in the West.

I am not at all persuaded that these essays make any real headway with respect to the intention to deconstruct and then to reconstruct the philosophy of religion. They even, in a sense, self deconstruct in that they are traditional philosophical arguments, i.e., written in a ‘pre-deconstructive’ mode that insists that such philosophical thinking is wholly inadequate to their tasks. Several of the authors are, embarrassedly, aware of this awkward fact but try, unsuccessfully, to evade it by claiming to be forced to such action by the demands of the academic community for whom they are writing. That they considered such a capitulation not unreasonable,

however, may say a great deal more about their aim to deconstruct the philosophy of religion than they would wish to acknowledge openly. This is not to say that nothing can be learned from the essays contained in this volume—Campney's piece on Xunzi and Durkheim on ritual for example is a very insightful essay—but only that the expectations the editors express with respect to them are far from being fulfilled.

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ELIOT DEUTSCH (Ed.), *Culture and Modernity: East-West Perspectives*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press 1991 (XVII + 641 p.)
ISBN 0-8248-1378-7 (cloth).

Culture and Modernity is the partial record of a conference held at the University of Hawaii in August of 1989, the sponsors being the university's department of philosophy and the Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy. This thought-provoking book is distinguished by its generally high quality and by the presence among its participants of both specialists in comparative philosophy and leading contemporary philosophers. As its title indicates, much of it is concerned with the nature of modernity and the relations between philosophy as such and culture (and cultures) in every sense. The essays included fall under ten heads: The crisis of modernity, incommensurability, relativism, language and non-Western cultural traditions, culture and the ethical, culture and the aesthetic, culture and the religious, culture and the political, cultural identity, and scientific progress. Under every one of these heads there are essays with at least an indirect relevance to religion. The essays under the heading "Culture and the Religious" are, respectively, on "The Transcendental in a Comparative Context," "Three Enduring Achievements of Islamic Philosophy," and "Two Dimensions of Religion: Reflections Based on Indian Spiritual Experience and Philosophical Traditions."

Culture and Modernity should most certainly be consulted by anyone interested in religion who wants to escape the limits of a single tradition. Because the participants themselves are often members of different traditions, they see religious and philosophical perspectives in quite varying lights. As the editor remarks, some of the participants celebrate similarities between cultures and some celebrate differences, but all

of them are committed to explaining their positions intelligibly and with philosophical care. It is hard to imagine that anyone who reads them seriously will not be affected intellectually and emotionally and in some way changed for the more understanding.

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MARTIN E. MARTY and R. SCOTT APPLEBY (Eds.), *Fundamentalisms Observed*. The Fundamentalism Project, Vol. 1. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press 1991 (872 p.) ISBN 0-226-50877-3 \$40.00.

In 1988 Martin E. Marty has suggested we study fundamentalism as an observable social phenomenon (cf. NUMEN 38, 1991 p. 130). Only three years later a first masterly volume of collected essays out of a series of five was published. A short and lucid introduction informs the reader how to use this manual and explains its subject: modern religious fundamentalisms. 'Modern' refers to a set of forces which fundamentalists perceive as a threat which inspires their rejection: secular rationality, religious tolerance and individualism. 'Religion' has to do with what concerns people ultimately. And 'fundamentalism'? According to the editors it is a coordinating term, definable only as a hypothetical family, as they explain in their conclusion. As its key feature they regard the act of "fighting back". Fundamentalists begin as traditionalists who perceive some challenge or threat to their core identity, both social and personal, and fight back with great innovative power (p. IX). This intriguing approach allows to compare various fundamentalisms. The 'Interim Report on a Hypothetical Family' at the end of the volume (p. 814-841) proves the scholarly advantage of this approach. It elaborates the crucial features of 'fighting back' and contains an impressive harvest of the fourteen preceding chapters.

In the first volume two approaches are webbed, we hear on p. X, the historical and the phenomenological. The last notion is used very modestly, referring primarily to the *epochē*, the bracketing of its own presuppositions. The historical contributions are focussing on the history of movements reacting to modernism and transforming their religious heritage into fundamentalisms. Well-known scholars have participated in this Chicago-project and produced a very knowledgeable survey of the history of fundamentalisms all over the world: N.T. Ammerman (North

American Protestant Fundamentalism); W.D. Dinges/J. Hitchcock (Roman Catholic Traditionalism and Activist Conservatism in the United States); P.A. Deiros (Protestant Fundamentalism in Latin America); S.C. Heilman/M. Friedman (Religious Fundamentalism and Religious Jews: The Case of the Haredim); G. Aran (Jewish Zionist Fundamentalism: The Bloc of the Faithful in Israel (Gush Emunim)); J.O. Voll (Fundamentalism in the Sunni Arab World: Egypt and the Sudan); A.A. Sachedina (Activist Shi'ism in Iran, Iraq, and Lebanon); M. Ahmad (Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia: The Jamaat-i-Islami and the Tablighi Jamaat); D. Gold (Organized Hinduism: from Vedic Truth to Hindu Nation); T.N. Madan (The Double-Edged Sword: Fundamentalism and the Sikh Religious Tradition); D.K. Swearer (Fundamentalist Movements in Theravada Buddhism); M. Nash (Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia and Indonesia); Tu Wei-ming (The Search for Roots in Industrial East Asia: The Case of the Confucian Revival); W. Davis (Fundamentalism in Japan: Religious and Political). A Glossary and Index make this volume a first rate manual.

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W. A. R. SHADID AND P. S. VAN KONINGSVELD (Eds.), *Islam in Dutch Society: Current Developments and Future Prospects*. Kampen: Kok Pharos 1992 (VIII + 205 p.) ISBN 90 942 3047-0.

This book contains a number of papers which were presented by various scholars and research assistants during a workshop on Religion and Emancipation of Ethnic Minorities in Western Europe, held in Leiden 1990. It especially deals with the situation of Islam in Dutch Society and is divided in three parts: Islamic Faith and Rituals in The Netherlands (I), Second Generation Muslims in The Netherlands (II) and Muslim Organizations in the Netherlands (III).

In the first chapter Van Koningsveld and Shadid give a detailed description of the legal adjustments for religious minorities in the case of the ritual slaughtering of animals during the last century. The discussion first focuses on the ritual slaughtering by the Jewish and Islamic communities in Holland. The authors show that the protests against ritual slaughtering as a form of animal abuse are often used by extremist groups as a form of propaganda to put ethnic and cultural minorities in an unfavourable

light. They show how the concept of religious freedom as an inalienable right enshrined in the constitution has been of paramount importance in the discussion on this subject and has overshadowed the arguments put forward by a.o. the Society of Protection of Animals for a legal obligation to stun animals before their slaughtering. The authors do not enter in a more principal discussion about the relation between the concept of religious freedom and other important values.

The second chapter contains an inventarisation by Landman of the (modest) role Sufi orders play in Dutch society. The third chapter deals with the practice of Islamic healing in cases of physical and psychological affliction without clear causes and its results. In chapter four Van der Lans and Rooijackers give a sociologic description of religious belief and unbelief among the second generation Turkish migrants by means of some specific sociological methods. One may ask oneself whether these results would have been different for youngsters between 18 and 25 in the big cities in Turkey. Besides, the low level of religious practice among those who prefer a metaphorical interpretation of religious statements may be explained by taking the group of respondents into account. It contains a relative high number of Alewites who usually do not attach a high importance to outward rituals (see D. F. Eickelmann, *Middle East*, Englewood Cliffs 1981, 220 with references). The following chapters deal with religious identity, integration and subjective well-being among young Turkish Muslims, with Moroccan and Turkish run-away girls and their problems, with Arabic language and culture teaching programs to Moroccan children, and with Islamic primary schools in the Netherlands. Chapter 9 gives a valuable description of the complex history of umbrella organizations in the Netherlands by A. van Bommel. The final chapters deal with the changing role of Islam and Muslim organizations among Turks and Moroccans and with religious institutionalization among Moluccans. In the epilogue Shadid and Van Koningsveld, basing themselves on the various papers, draw some future prospects of Muslims in the Netherlands.

The book gives the reader not a bad idea of the present state of affairs with respect to investigations of Islam in the Dutch context and shows that much research has to be done in the near future.

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DAVID S. POTTER, *Prophecy and History in the Crisis of the Roman Empire. A Historical Commentary on the Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle* (Oxford Classical Monographs) — Oxford: Clarendon Press 1990 (XIX + 443 p.) ISBN 0-19-814483-0 (cloth) \$ 110.00.

This is an admirable piece of scholarship. Potter is able to situate the authors of *Or. Sib.* XIII in mid-third century CE Northern Syria, where they describe the political upheaval of their times (between 238 and 267) as they have experienced it (especially during the clashes between Rome and Persia), and all that in the veiled language so characteristic of Sibylline prophecy. In a long introduction of some 160 pages Potter discusses the political situation of the Roman empire in the mid-third century, the historiography of that period, the origin, growth and nature of the Sibylline Oracles, and the place of *Or. Sib.* XIII in that collection. Then follows a new edition of the Greek text with Potter's own translation. The *pièce de résistance* of the work is the detailed commentary (almost 170 pages on 173 lines of Greek!) where Potter demonstrates his impressive mastery of both primary sources (not only literary but also epigraphical and numismatic) and secondary literature which enables him to decode the often extremely obscure language of the oracles. Potter disagrees on many points with previous interpreters of the text, and in almost all cases he succeeded in convincing the present reviewer. It is only in his repeated insistence that the authors were neither Jews nor Christians but pagans that he still leaves me in some doubt. So much of the language has a biblical ring about it (as Potter's own comparative material often demonstrates) that I for one cannot regard the occurrence of Ares as the god of war in the text as a decisive counter-argument (it may be no more than a figure of speech comparable to the use of Hades in Jewish and Christian texts). This is a brilliant book from which I have learnt much. Two funny mistakes: the title of Moretti's book is *Iscrizioni agonistiche greche*, not *Iscrizione agnostiche greche* (p. 417), and the initials of Edouard des Places are not R.P., this means 'Révérend Père' (p. 419)! Unfortunately the general index is very incomplete.

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BERNARD McGINN, *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism*. Vol. 1: *The Foundations of Mysticism: Origin to the Fifth Century*. New York: Crossroad 1991 (XXII, 494 p.) ISBN 0-8245-1121-2.

Although this volume has been hailed as initiating "one of the great projects of theological scholarship in our decade", McGinn's impressive effort (this hefty volume is only the first of four planned) is conceived as a historical study of religious ideas, and its value must be assessed by the historian rather than by the theologian. The study of Christian mysticism is obviously much more developed than that of either Jewish or Islamic mysticism—to limit the comparison to cognate religions. Editions and translations of texts, monographic studies of authors or themes, cover most of the ground. Yet this often partisan scholarship seems to suffer from a deep and complex difficulty. At the core of this reluctantly recognized problem lies the very definition of Christian mysticism and the boundaries of the phenomenon. Is mysticism identical with whatever is loftiest in Christian religious experience? Should we equate Christian mysticism with 'spirituality'? The last term has been found most convenient in the last generation, a fact for which testify, for instance, the still ongoing *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, the transformation of the *Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique* into the *Revue de Spiritualité*, or the ambitious series of translated texts called *The Classics of Western Spirituality*, a project in which McGinn has been taking a major part in the last decade. The danger, of course, is that by encompassing too much, one loses the heuristic coherence achieved by a more precisely limited phenomenon. It seems that one can find as many answers to these seemingly perennial questions about the scope and definition of mysticism and mystical experience as there are scholars. These issues, of course, are heavily loaded, and the religious and theological background of most students is felt here more heavily than elsewhere. In the Protestant traditions, one senses a profound and clearly expressed mistrust of mystical experience, and hence a traditional lack of interest in mystical literature, deemed 'otherworldly'. From the Catholic side, suspicions run deep about the value not only of Protestant, but also of Eastern ('Orthodox' or not) spiritual life. Such suspicions are highlighted, for instance, by many entries in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* written in the first decades of the century.

The result is a dearth of synthetic scholarly studies, *unparteilich*, as the Germans used to say, which seek to encompass the history of Christian mysticism. McGinn deserves our respect and gratitude for having dared to attempt such a task. It is of course impossible to judge final results from the publication of the first volume, but we may already venture to evaluate the success of the enterprise.

McGinn is well aware of the intractable problem of the definition of mysticism in general, and of Christian mysticism in particular. Rather than establishing his work on his own definition, McGinn has decided, wisely, to offer a lengthy survey of the various approaches to the study of mysticism. He analyses in turn theological, philosophical, and comparative and psychological approaches to the understanding of mysticism since the late nineteenth century. This survey, in the form of a lengthy appendix (about 100 pages with the footnotes), as well documented as the rest of the volume, represents a remarkable study of a peculiar chapter in modern intellectual history, and should be extremely useful to students of mystical phenomena in different religious traditions.

The nouns 'mystic', 'mysticism', do not appear before the seventeenth century, a fact underlined by Michel de Certeau. What we have in the early centuries is the adjective: *mystikè theologia*, developed and christianized from its previous Greek use in connection with what is called under the generic term of 'mystery religions'. Origen, the monastic writers (with Evagrius Ponticus at their head), Pseudo-Dionysus the Areopagite, offer the main articulations in the crystallization of Christian mystical vocabulary. But these authors, predecessors of Monsieur Jourdain as it were, had no idea that they were speaking 'mysticism'. McGinn shows great intellectual sophistication in analyzing their thought, and Christian mysticism *in the making*.

On various occasions, McGinn notes the ambivalent attitude of the Patristic writers to esotericism, in contradistinction to Jewish mystical literature. He is to be commended for his recognition of the Jewish matrix of early Christian mysticism and of the crucial importance of early Jewish mystical and esoteric traditions for the formation of Christian mysticism. Here, he breaks new ground, and parts company with most previous students of early Christian mysticism, who understood it mainly as a transformation of Platonic traditions and vocabulary. The precise ways in which Christian mysticism emerged, however, still seem to elude us, and must remain a task for future research. I expect Gnosticism, Merkavah literature (i.e. the Jewish mystical texts of late antiquity), later Greek philosophical esotericism, and various aspects of the late antique religious *koinè*, such as the levels of popular and higher religion, or the relationships between oral and written traditions, to all play a major role in this analysis.

But the goal of the book lies elsewhere: in a clear and informed presentation, in chronological order, of the development of themes, language, and figures. McGinn indeed knows, and duly states, that Christian mysticism was not evident, at least in the Latin West, before the fourth

century. Yet, he finds it necessary to postulate, with Friedrich von Hügel, “that from the start Christianity contained a mystical element, or at least that the central themes in the new religion were capable of a mystical interpretation...” (p. 65). This may well be true, but would it be true of early Christianity more than of other religious trends of the times? To be sure, it might seem odd to begin a history of Christian mysticism without a chapter on Jesus, or at least on the New Testament, although it should be recognized that the only reference of any relevance to a mystical experience in this corpus is Paul’s allusion in 2 Cor 12: 1-6. After a chapter on Clement of Alexandria and Origen, the crucial importance of the milieu of early monasticism is given its due. McGinn shows clearly the reinterpretation and the development of earlier (mainly Origenian) ideas among both theoreticians and practitioners of monastic spirituality and its mystical acme. A chapter on early Latin spirituality, with its introduction of Platonic themes and vocabulary, mainly in Ambrose, introduces, a long, sensitive chapter on Augustine, “the Founding Father”. This chapter does not only analyse the major texts, but also raises the issue of “the ambiguities involved in the denomination *Augustinus mysticus*. ” There is very little to add to what the author says on the different issues he tackles. McGinn’s judgment is usually as well-balanced as his knowledge of texts and of the issues is impressive. He does not approach the subject with a preconceived thesis on the nature of Christian mysticism, but often succeeds in defusing false problems, created from ill-framed alternatives, often the heritage of theological tradition, such as the controversy over the question of Origen as being “primarily a Platonic intellectual mystic or an affective Christian one” 6p. 125). Similarly, his analysis of the erotic element and of love vocabulary in early Christian spirituality is refreshing, and sets research on a new footing.

Together with the author, however, one does regret his (understandable) decision to limit his study to the Western tradition. One could have hoped for a longer discussion, for instance, of Gregory of Nyssa and of the Pseudo-Macarian writings. Indeed, the specific character of the spirituality of an Ambrose or an Augustine would be best grasped through precise comparison with that of towering figures from the East, the Cappadocians for instance. In the following volumes, McGinn will be on the ground with which he is most familiar: the mystical literature of the Latin Middle Ages. The absence of the great Byzantine literary tradition and of its aftermath from the completed *opus* strikes one as sad indeed. This absence also gives the whole enterprise an undesirable (and unintended) teleological orientation: it is of great importance for the student of religion to see the various possibilities of Christian mysticism analysed together,

for their own sake, and not as stages, as it were, in a development to their full blossoming in the West. One wonders whether a collaborator could still be approached, who would undertake to add a volume on the Eastern mystical tradition.

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PATRICK J. GEARY, *Furta Sacra. Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages*, rev. ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press 1991 (XVI + 219 p.) ISBN 0 691 00862 0 pbk. \$12.95.

The recent reissue of Patrick Geary's *Furta Sacra* in a revised and updated paperback edition provides a welcome occasion to appreciate the merits of this insightful work which analyzes relic theft in Europe during the ninth through the eleventh centuries based primarily on *translationes* (texts describing the relocation of relics). Since the original version of his work was published in 1978, the study of the Christian cult of relics has itself undergone a kind of translation, moving from the periphery of historical studies to the center of medieval religious and social history. The present text, while it incorporates numerous corrections of detail and some expansion based on more recent scholarship, nevertheless follows the original line of inquiry and documentation of its earlier version. That basic orientation, put in its broadest terms, was "to examine how people of the ninth through eleventh centuries integrated essential aspects of the sacred sphere into the mundane."

This is a very broad scholarly agenda, and one of the particular strengths of Geary's work is the extent to which he succeeds in illuminating the numerous functions that the relic cult played in the political, economic, and religious life of the central middle ages while at the same time revealing significant regional and temporal variations in the cult. In this respect, Geary's work can be seen as informed by both the synchronic focus that characterizes anthropology and the diachronic orientation of traditional historical studies.

The book opens with a chapter that addresses the special usefulness of relics, which are themselves objects devoid of intrinsic meaning, for illuminating the contours of the particular cultures in which they are held in reverence. Geary then turns to a consideration of the problematic nature of his *translationes* as historical sources, noting that they both reflect hagiographical concerns and, in some cases, provide reliable testimony to

historical events. One can detect in Geary's argument here an empiricist orientation that presumes a fundamental dichotomy between the historical "facts" and the purported anti-historical, supernatural perspective of the texts' authors. Unfortunately, the drawing of such a sharp contrast between the scholar's concern with historical fact and the supernatural orientation of the medieval world obscures both the positionality of the historian and the culture and social heterogeneity of the middle ages.

The author goes on to examine the historical foundations of the medieval relic cult in the Carolingian period (chapter two), the character of the commercial enterprise devoted to the procurement and sale of relics (chapter three), and the roles that relics and relic thefts played in such divergent settings as the monasteries of feudal Europe and the cities of Italy (chapter four and five). The final two chapters take up broader synthetic issues. Chapter six considers the medieval belief in the living presence of the saint in his or her physical remains, and the role that this played in justifying the illicit transfer of those remains from one location to another. For surely the remains of such a powerful spiritual being could only be moved if the saint assented to the translation, a movement that invariably resulted in, according to the rhetoric of these medieval accounts, an elevation in status. Chapter seven summarizes the author's conclusions, identifying six basic circumstances that gave rise to relic theft accounts in this period, circumstances that ranged from economic adversity to competition between monasteries.

As this survey suggest, Geary has undertaken an ambitious task here, especially in the context of a book that numbers just over 200 pages. I found myself at points frustrated by the lack of attention to the ritual setting in which these texts and the broader cult of relics was set. Likewise, much more could be done to illuminate the architectural and aesthetic contexts which, along with the translation accounts, shaped the meaning of a particular relic for its devoted following. Yet it is precisely Geary's success in demonstrating the value of the relic cult for both synchronic and diachronic inquiry that leads one to look forward to further research that will both broaden the study to include cross-cultural data and give further attention to the non-textual aspects of the cult of relics.

The book includes an extensive bibliography, an index, and a handlist of relic thefts attributed to the period from 800-1100.

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WILHELM HALBFASS, *Tradition and Reflection. Explorations in Indian Thought.*

Albany: State University of New York Press 1991 (VIII, 425 p.)

ISBN 0 7914 0361 0 \$18.95.

This book contains ten highly interesting and scholarly essays on fundamental issues of traditional Indian self-understanding. Its topics include the idea of dharma, karman and rebirth, the role of man in the universe, the structure of society, the relation between ritual norms and universal ethics, questions concerning motivation and justification of human actions, and reflections on the goals and sources of human understanding. The book especially deals with the relations and tensions between reason and Vedic revelation, with theoretical reconstructions of traditional norms and concepts and with the philosophical responses to the idea of the Veda.

The approach of the author is partly philosophical, partly philological and historical. The essays deal with the Indian reflections on the sources, the internal structure and the inherent meaning of the Hindu tradition, and with philosophical responses to social and historical realities by authoritative leading exponents of 'orthodox' Hindu tradition such as Śaṅkara, Kumārila, Bartṛhari and others. Halbfass tries to understand these modes of thought by dealing with Indian tradition through the medium of Indian theoretical and soteriological reflection.

The first chapter is more or less programmatic for the book and deals with the idea of the Veda and the identity of Hinduism. It focuses on the question: 'Is the Veda, which the dharmaśāstra and the "orthodox" systems of Hindu philosophy present as the measure of orthodoxy, actually a projection and a fiction?' This question is framed in the ongoing debate on the meaning of the concept of Hinduism and its constructions by modern western Orientalists. In this context Halbfass deals with the rhetorical statements of Edward Said and his adept R. Inden on the Eurocentric preconceptions of the 'Orient'. He poses numerous questions with respect to the thesis on the "Orientalist construction" of Indian civilization and Western "discourses of domination" and tries to find answers for a balanced solution in the philosophical and theological discourses of Indian tradition itself. Halbfass acknowledges that these answers may contain expressions of wishful thinking, attempts to legitimize divisions of society and relationships of exclusion and subordination, but they also contain expressions of a self-understanding and a sense of identity, which is characterized by the idea of dharma as reflected in Mimāṃsa and Dharmaśāstra. He warns that it is very easy to underestimate their central and paradigmatic role.

The next chapters serve to illustrate the way in which tradition func-

tions in Indian thought. Halbfass deals with the presence of the Veda in Indian philosophical tradition (2), with Vedic orthodoxy and the plurality of religious traditions (3), with Vedic apologetics, ritual killing and the foundation of ethics (4), with human reason and Vedic revelation in Advaita Vedānta (5), with Śaṅkara and his relation to the Yoga of Patañjali (6), with the therapeutic paradigm and the search for identity in Indian philosophy (7), with man and self in traditional Indian thought (8), with karma, Vedic rituals and the natural world (9), and with the *Homo Hierarchicus* or the conceptualization of the varna system in Indian thought (10). In all these essays Halbfass examines the arguments which are brought forward by Indian authors and their relations to the authoritative Vedic tradition, which is supposed to be the core of Indian civilization. Some of the essays are rather technical—e.g. chapters 5 and 6—and require the knowledge of Sanskrit and Indian philosophy, while others are written for a larger group of readers. This book is not easy to read for historians of religion who are not acquainted with Indian civilization, but it deals with highly interesting and important topics which deserve a broad attention.

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ANDRÉ PADOUX, *Vāc. The Concept of the Word in Selected Hindu Tantras*. Translated by Jacques Gontier. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press 1990 (XV + 460 p.) ISBN 0 7914 0257 6 \$ 18.95.

Vāc presents a wealth of material on Tantric philosophy, although the title seems precisely focused on “the Word,” and promises to deal only with *some* Tantric texts. Following his introduction, the author presents subsequently 1) “Early Speculations about the Significance and Powers of the Word;” 2) a general orientation on what characterizes Tantrism (“Tantrism—The Texts of Kashimirian Śaivism;”) 3) some philosophical ideas on the crucial issue of “The manifestation of Sound;” 4) “The Levels of the Word;” 5) “The Phonematic Emanation;” 6) “The Sixfold Course (*Sadādhvan*);” 7) “The Mantra;” and a very brief “Conclusion.” The work intends to fill the need for a reference work to the world of Tantra; that purpose could have been enhanced through the addition of a general index; the index now provided excludes personal names and is limited to a list of more or less technical terms, presupposing a more than

superficial knowledge of the subject as well as the various philosophers cited. The bibliography, however, is quite helpful.

Thus we have an introductory, informative book about Tantric thought—not ritual—and it succeeds probably more than any other work, although it is certainly not the sort of book even a well-educated person would easily read cover to cover. It is no doubt true that the thought rather than the cultic meditational details of Tantrism will arouse the widest interest for any audience intrigued by “the mysteries of India.” The area of Tantrism cannot be said to have released its secrets to the intellectual world, in spite of the growing body of literature produced by Western scholars.

To some extent the ambiguity of Padoux’s work—specialized yet general in intent—can be explained by the fact that it is an updated, elaborated re-working of his dissertation of 1964. It can also be understood as resulting from the state of specialized scholarship on the subject. It goes without saying that we cannot hold one author accountable for this state of affairs. And we may be grateful to Harvey P. Alper, whose own work on Tantric philosophy was a model of clear interpretation, and whose untimely death deprived us of a fuller exposition, urged Padoux to compose the present work. (For Alper’s contributions to the subject, see the work he himself edited, *Understanding Mantras*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989). Padoux can be said to have taken on the role of Mentor for the sub-group of Indologists dealing with Tantra. (Note his role in the discussions reflected in the book he himself edited, *Mantras et diagrammes rituels dans l’Hindouisme*, Paris: Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1984, as well as in Alper’s book, mentioned before). His presence is most beneficial to remind us of all the facts and texts to be considered in the wide area of Indology.

Nevertheless, what Tantrism “amounts to” is not easy to gather from the work before us. The urgency of this question cannot be ignored, not even by specialists. General, comparative students of history, if choosing their readings carefully, can avoid some of the worst misconceptions of Hinduism, but the subject of Tantrism has not become transparent by any standard. The present, informative book might have gained in importance if the author had given us an assessment of the history of interpretation since Arthur Avalon (whose works have been steadily reprinted). We cannot help but ask in what sequence of endeavors *this* work takes on its significance. Padoux himself is aware of historians of religions as concerned with the subject (p. vii), and the work purports to be more than a discourse for fellow Tantricists. It discusses at length many matters that are very well known to them and to general students of India (e.g., the

Vedic and Brahmanic veneration of Vāc and speculations on *om*). It is difficult to understand how a history of Tantric scholarship, needed for our evaluation of what we understand, could be left out. Only occasionally one catches a glimpse of this important dimension of the study, as when Padoux mentions Winternitz, early on in the work (p. 15). There, and in a mere footnote, Winternitz is quoted; and it is left to the reader to guess that the quote is an abhorrent example of an erudite exegesis.

The strength of the work, Padoux's fearlessness in playing the necessary role of teacher of elementary matters, is at the same time its weakness. Failing to struggle with the question what Tantrism really is, the book becomes repetitious. Of course, everyone knows that *brahman* was the generating principle and basis of the world, and at the same time the goal of the aspirant for liberation from upanishadic times on. (It was the basic reason Avalon relied on Advaita Vedānta). This "doubleness" is also reflected in the various chapters. The absolute quality of the original sound (the basis of the world) does not lose its absoluteness when it takes on its seemingly fragmentary forms in the world. There are levels to the word, and yet they remain in some manner the same supreme Vāc. There is one great instruction, yet it comes down to us in different ways.

The interrelationship of the cosmogony and the process of liberation is attested throughout Indian history. It is the point crucial to most *yoga* texts. We should be grateful to Padoux for having gone through the teachings of Utpaladeva, Abhinavagupta, Jayaratha, Kṣemarāja, and others, who all analyzed and speculated on language. What makes India so special? And what makes Tantric speculation on Vāc so special within India? It seems to me that the question is not really faced.

I am afraid that readers might be given the impression that all the Indian thinkers dealt with indulged in some strange mental acrobatics, much less convincing and far stranger than the thought of Śaṅkara with which Avalon was familiar. And such an impression would be unfortunate. The Tantric experience, so splendidly analyzed by Abhinavagupta and the other Tantric philosophers, does remain a particular "obsession" with experience. It is far more than the fascination with "aesthetics" many pages in the book point to. It is (should one have to apologize for saying it?) a *religious* affair. The devotee in Tantrism has access to liberation. Logically, this might seem the same as the paradox of *brahman* as ground of the world and goal reached by the *mukta*. Nevertheless, the obsession with man's access to the "ultimate" makes for a very different, indeed recognizably Tantric expression.

Of course, none of these remarks are meant to deny the existence of many sober-minded, clearly expressed analyses in Tantric tradition, and

Padoux has given us many examples, for which we should remain grateful. But can one deal with them to the exclusion of the context in Tantric praxis? And is it possible to suggest general features of Tantrism and ignore the historical matrix in which Buddhism functioned? Some Buddhism was not merely "also Tantric," but Tantric before and together with Hinduism. It seems historically questionable to overlook "acculturation" processes in the formation of the very forms we study, also in philosophical texts. Yet Padoux decided to deal with some Hindu materials in isolation, and looks upon them mainly as intellectual expressions. It is important for historians of religions to keep this in mind when they make use of this informative work.

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DEBA BRATA SENSHARMA: *The Philosophy of Sādhanā, with Special Reference to the Trika Philosophy of Kashmir*. Foreword by Paul Muller-Ortega—Albany, NY: State University of New York Press 1990. SUNY Series in Tantric Studies (xix + 196 p.) ISBN 0-7914-0348-3 \$ 12.95

In the past few years the State University of New York Press has published a considerable number of books dealing with the Hindu Tantra and the non-dualistic Śaiva traditions of Kashmir. These have included both original monographs and reprints or new editions of earlier works which apparently were considered to merit being made available again to scholars. The book under review falls within the second category, having been originally published in Karnal, 1983. While some books published after 1983 are listed in the bibliography, a glance at the first edition showed that no substantial changes have been made to the text, though the English has been frequently improved.

SenSharma is undoubtedly quite well-read in the largely Kashmiri texts he bases himself on. Nonetheless, as a serious original contribution to our knowledge of the Trika this book must unfortunately be said to have little value. The author can not be said to go beyond the already existing secondary literature, and largely confines himself to setting down and elucidating what he considers the main points of the system. In doing so, he shows little awareness of the historical complexities of the system(s) he deals with. Throughout the book it is evident that for SenSharma

“Trika” is the Pratyabhijñā-based Trika of Abhinavagupta; on p. 11 he even remarks that:

A word of explanation is necessary for our using the name Trika in preference to Pratyabhijñā, which has been used by Mādhabacārya [sic] in his compendium *Sarva-darśana-samgraha* [sic] to denote this school of Śaivism.

Earlier forms of the Trika, as found in the few surviving *āgamas* of the school and recently studied by Sanderson, are thus disregarded here, or not distinguished from the teaching of Abhinavagupta. But even of Abhinavagupta’s Trika he paints a one-sided picture, all but ignoring the important part still played by elements of the earlier system. Thus one looks in vain for a mention of the worship of the goddesses Parā, Parāparā and Aparā, as well as of the fourth goddess Kālī/Kālasaṅkarṣinī.

A serious error arising from SenSharma’s lack of attention to historical development must be pointed out in footnote 18 on p. 112. There we read that

... the founder of the system [i.e. the Trika!], Vasugupta, has divided the *Śiva Sūtras* into three sections, viz., the *sāmbhavopāya*, the *sāktopāya*, and the *ānavopāya* corresponding to the three *upāyas* mentioned above.

Apart from the surprising reference to Vasugupta, the ‘discoverer’ of the *Śivasūtras*, as the founder of the Trika, SenSharma has mistaken Kṣemarāja (for it is in fact this famous disciple of Abhinavagupta who interpreted the sections of the *Śivasūtras* as corresponding to the *upāyas*) for Vasugupta. The author of the *Śivasūtras* almost certainly did not intend such a correspondence (cf. A. Sanderson’s review of L. Silburn’s translation of the *Śivasūtras* in BSOAS 46.1 (1983), 160-161).¹

This book is therefore probably best regarded as an introduction to certain elements of the Trika of Abhinavagupta, aimed at the reader with no Sanskrit and little specialist knowledge. And indeed, the fact that SenSharma never quotes or translates a Sanskrit passage from his texts, but merely paraphrases, while referring to the text-passage in a footnote, and that he generally provides English equivalents for the numerous Sanskrit terms,² suggests that it was such a public that he had in mind. Even in this respect, however, he cannot be said to have been wholly successful, and it seems doubtful that historians of religion will benefit greatly from his work.

In the first place, there remain several passages which despite the author’s efforts will unquestionably remain opaque to those unfamiliar with Sanskrit. Two examples may suffice. In chapter five, called “Ways of Spiritual Discipline”, the longest and most important section of the book, SenSharma gives an account of the emanation of the Sanskrit

alphabet largely based on Abhinavagupta's *Tantrasāra* (TS) and *Tantrāloka* (TĀ). The term *yoni* ('womb') is mentioned twice in this context: on p. 121 the author refers to "... *kalā*-products (technically called *yoni*)" and on the following page, footnote 59, he tells us that "the following movements" (i.e. the "movements" following on the manifestation of the vowels) are "technically described as the *yoni*". It would be surprising if a reader unfamiliar with the texts would have a clear idea (or any idea at all) of what *yoni* actually means here; the more so since the glossary defines *kalā* as "Authorship, an aspect of Śakti" and *yoni* as "(1) Womb; (2) Type". Confusion could however have been avoided if SenSharma had simply stated that in this particular context *yoni* is a technical term referring to the consonants, "wombs" (feminine) which are produced from the *bijas* ("seeds" = vowels: masculine) and again through contact with the "seeds" produce further emanations. For this explanation he could in addition to TS ch. III, p. 15 (*tadutham vyāñjanātmakam yonirūpam*) for instance have adduced Abhinavagupta's main scriptural authority, the *Mālinivijayottaratantra* (3.11a: *kādibhiś ca smṛtā yonih*, also quoted by Jayaratha ad TĀ 3.180), or Jayaratha who in his commentary on both TĀ 3.199 and 3.232 explains *bhinnayoni* (a qualification used by Abhinavagupta for the *mālinī* alphabet) as *bhinnā bijair bheditā yonayo vyāñjanāni yasyāḥ sā tathāvidhā satī*.

A few pages later we find a sentence which may well baffle the reader:

But soon they [i.e. the *sādhakas*] complete the survey of the entire field of the ever-vibrating and ever-expressing *kalās* of Śakti, said to be consisting of fifty different self-expressions of Śakti, as described above, or eighty-one *kalās* when their *ardhamātrās* [sic] are also counted as distinct self-expressions (*parāmarśa*).

Not only is this a definitely non-distinct self-expression of SenSharma's, but he simply does not bother to explain to the non-Sanskritist reader what an *ardhamātrā* (half-mora) is—one looks in vain in his glossary—or why fifty letters of the Sanskrit alphabet should add up to eighty-one of them. For an accurate and clear explanation one may refer to A. Padoux, *Vāc: The Concept of the Word in Selected Hindu Tantras*, Albany, NY, 1990, p. 161-165.³

More serious than such unclear or inaccurate explanation are the occasional cases of actual misrepresentation or error. Fortunately these are quite few in number, thanks to SenSharma's familiarity with the texts. One such case should however at least be briefly mentioned. In his treatment of the *upāyas* ("means"), SenSharma maintains that *dīkṣā* (initiation) is essential for followers of all *upāyas*. Even in the case of *anupāya*, the highest means, he states on p. 114 that *dīkṣā* is necessary, though he adds

in footnote 25 that “... it is *possible* [italics mine] that there is no need for external ceremonials in *dikṣā* [sic] in their case”.⁴ The truth is that in numerous places Abhinavagupta makes clear that “external ceremonials” are required only in the case of the lowest *upāya*, *ānavopāya*, (e.g. TĀ 1.219-20 and 1.230-231 with Jayaratha’s commentary), and that the higher *upāyas* are gnostic rather than ritualistic in nature.⁵

The book is handsomely produced but somewhat disfigured by an inordinate number of misprints in Sanskrit words.

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¹ A further surprising slip in regard to the *Sivasūtras* is the statement on p. 11 that three commentaries are available on this text. In fact, in addition to the ones listed by SenSharma, there is also a *vārtika* by Varadarāja, and this is even included in the bibliography.

² These are however often not very satisfactory. A single example: on p. 91, both *utkṛṣṭatīvra* and *madhyatīvra* are translated as “extremely intense”. This obscures the distinction between these two levels of *śaktipāta* (SenSharma: “infusion of divine grace”).

³ This is a thoroughly revised translation of Padoux’s *Recherches sur la symbolique et l’énergie de la parole dans certains textes tantriques*, Paris 1963, where the same subject was treated on p. 136-139.

⁴ Compare also SenSharma’s remarks on *dikṣā* on p. 99-103. Lack of space prohibits me from going into his comments in detail, but I would at least like to remark that TĀ 13.166-168, referred to in foot-note 58 on p. 99, does not, as SenSharma suggests, state that *dikṣā* is an *essential* step in the path of integral Self-realization; *prātibha* (*jñāna*) is also said to lead to liberation: *dikṣayā mucyate jantuh prātibhena tathā priye* // TĀ 13.168cd.

⁵ On the fact that *dikṣā* and other outward practices are not necessary for those who receive an extreme “descent of power/grace” see for instance TĀ 15.275cd-276ab: *ye tu tīvratamodriktaśaktinirmalatājuṣah* // (275) *na te dikṣāmanunyāsakariṇaś ceti varnitam!*.

LEE SIEGEL, *Net of Magic. Wonders and Deceptions in India*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press 1991 (VIII, 455 p.)
 ISBN 0 226 75687 4 £15.95 (pbk.)

Lee Siegel is a Sanskritist and professor of religion; additionally, he is a practising magician. *Net of Magic* brings together both personae to achieve an extraordinary feat: a meticulously researched academic book that is also spell-binding entertainment. As he writes, “this book... is a

set of tricks, illusions that are meant to represent realities, and realities meant to represent illusions" (p. 1). Writing with a novelist's skill, Siegel draws his readers around a Möbius-strip of approaches towards magic in India. The imaginative vantage of a young street performer gives way to the perspective of a traveling academic describing street performers; a review of Sanskrit references to magic bends into a suspenseful narrative of ancient magicians; a fictional stage magician by the name of Professor Bannerji (Siegel's alter-ego) bursts out of often hilarious interactions with a variety of contemporary stage magicians; historical surveys of Western accounts of Indian magic blend seamlessly into present realities.

Street magicians, Siegel finds, are today poor Muslims of the Maslet subcaste of performers who probably converted from Hinduism in the nineteenth century. Stage magicians, on the other hand, tend to be middle-class Hindus that model themselves on the illustrious P.C. Sorcar Senior who, around the time of Indian Independence, first sported the costume of a turbaned Maharaja for performances within the country and abroad. Siegel demonstrates how magicians play upon the persona of the Hindu ascetic who has acquired spiritual powers, and how, for Western audiences magic is subsumed within the trope of the mysterious, mystical—and for critics, misguided—East. Further, Siegel traces lines of historical influence between magic East and West. While he himself buys boxed Indian magic tricks from Hollywood distributors, he also contributes a "needle through arm" trick to the repertoire of his street performing friends.

Woven through the book are musings on the transmission of knowledge between fathers and sons, and reasons why women have been marginalized as performers. Siegel reminds us of a human urge to reclaim the wonder associated with a child's perspective. Ultimately, this comic and delightful audacious book is a philosophical meditation on the nature of reality as a magic trick, on representation itself as a skillful illusion.

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ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF AFRICAN RELIGIONS*

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Summary

This paper arose from a presentation to an I.H.A.R. conference on the study of religions in Africa. The paper looks at lessons that might be learned from social anthropologists for the study of African religions. I start by looking at problems in collecting data: there are the limitations of the observer's point of view, the pervasiveness of relations of power between observer and observed, and limitations even of the views of members of the society we might wish to study. Post-modernist anthropologists emphasise the need for sensitivity to the perspectives of their subjects, which requires long immersion in the culture concerned together with an awareness of the limitations of the anthropologist's own perspective. This in turn requires a style of presentation which gives space to informants' perspectives, and which clearly displays the anthropologist's role in the collection and interpretation of data. The paper points out that although this style of presentation has advantages for the interpretation of other religions, it does not pay attention to causal connections between religion and other social phenomena, which can have important consequences for the people concerned. Finally, the paper delves into problems of relativism in the study of religions, and questions both the possibility and the desirability of value-free academic discourse. The problem of avoiding ethnocentrism in the study of religions cannot be avoided simply by abstaining from judgement.

Social anthropologists have for long been prominent in the study of African religions. Although some scholars within the discipline have taken a positivist approach, which seeks to explain religion rather than interpret it, there have been many anthropologists who are sympathetic to religion, and who have tried to understand religion from the point of view of the participants. There is no difference between the aims of such anthropologists and those of 'phenomenologists' in the study of religions. In this paper, I focus on recent 'post-modernist' developments which are very much concerned with the insiders' points of view. I use the term of 'radical empiricism', adopted by some of the authors of these developments.¹ I indicate some of the problems which gave rise to this approach, the response of post-modern radical empiricism, and to some of its short-comings. Finally, I discuss problems with avoiding any kind of value judgements in our study of religions.

Problems with data

Academic work would be much simpler than it is, and less interesting, if we first could simply collect data, and subsequently analyse it. Human cognition does not work like that. When we collect data, what we collect is already influenced by our vision and interpretation. While data must be the basis of our understanding, we need to recognise the limitations of any data we collect.

The most obvious limitations are those of time and space. You can only see and hear a limited amount. Even if you are studying a particular ritual which you can attend from beginning to end and which involves a small group of people who are present throughout the ritual, you are still not able to see what all the people do in preparation for, and after, the ritual. You cannot attend all similar rituals, and you may miss significant alterations or emphases which give meaning to the ritual only when understood against others. Rituals acquire meaning in a social context, and our access to that context is always limited.

Our data are further limited by the cognitive baggage that we bring to observation. What we observe is limited by our prior interests. If an academic with a background in comparative religions were to attend and describe a traditional rural Shona burial, he might notice with surprise that there was no ritual specialist present, a point which might not interest someone familiar with Shona culture. Or he might mistake for a ritual specialist a friend or kinsman with a special role in the proceedings. His studies have told him to describe the roles of ritual specialists. But such an academic might not notice that no one is wearing red, or that although the deceased was a close relative of the chief, the chief was not present. What a researcher notices and finds interesting depends on what he is looking for. Training in a range of academic fields can improve the scope of your observations, just as a portrait artist can learn to notice features on a face that the rest of us miss. Nevertheless, the observations of even a well-trained observer are those of a particular person with particular interests.

The very categories in which we place the data involve bias. We study religion, because it is a distinct area of study in Western societies. In African societies, religion is so much part of everyday life that its isolation as a distinct area of study can be questioned.

It is not even clear how far the Western term ‘spirit’ is applicable to African beliefs about their dead. When we use a European or Western category to cover institutions in African societies, we must be ready to modify the categories to fit the institutions, rather than distort our accounts of the institutions to fit the categories.

As V.Y. Mudimbe has observed,² there is no simple solution to this problem. As members of an international community, we have to use language and categories that are intelligible to this wider community. At the same time, we must find ways of expressing our observations that are true to the African peoples we wish to study.

Michel Foucault has pointed out that when we subject people to our observation, this can be an expression and form of control. If we observe the religious system of other people and fit it neatly into our own pre-conceived categories, this can comprise an assertion of the superiority of our own point of view and an assertion of a difference in status and power between the observer and the observed. Power and interest is expressed in virtually every type of statement. In all knowledge, the knower imposes himself (or herself) on what is known. Knowledge is itself a relation of power (a point well appreciated in traditional African secret societies). Post-modern radical empiricism is sensitive to this problem, and is concerned to give due status to the perceptions of informants. These perceptions need to be taken seriously, and treated on a par with the perceptions of the academic researcher. Scholars should try to establish with those they are studying relationships which allow conversations between equals, rather than conversations controlled by the observers.

If the relationship between the researcher and the people under study is to be one of equality, researchers must be open about their study, and clearly state what they are doing and why. According to this ideal of equality, if researchers expect others to speak about beliefs, they in turn should be prepared to speak about their own beliefs and establish a dialogue with their informants, in which the understanding of each side is openly declared and is subject to modification (perhaps of a very minor kind) through insights gained in the dialogue. This seems to preclude the phenomenological ideal of maintaining *epochē*.

Another problem concerning observation by outsiders is that

sometimes they observe reactions to themselves. Rituals may be performed with unusual care because an outsider is present. Beliefs may be modified to cater for what the outsider is expected to tolerate. Again, radical empiricism is sensitive to this issue and demands that attention be paid to the role of the scholar in his conversations with the people he is studying.

One solution to these problems might be to leave collection of data to participants, who have more detailed access than any outsider. But observations of insiders are also limited. An insider may not be aware that other people in the community see and interpret things differently. An insider may not notice how a practice affects differently members of different status groups: a chief may not notice how the poorest people resent having to give from their meager store of grain to honour the spirits, and the priest might not be aware of how many of his congregation regularly offer beer to their ancestors. Even insiders are constrained by their personal points of view.³

In particular, insiders often take for granted the dominant ideology of their community, and do not notice how much behaviour diverges from this ideology. A Catholic might say that marriage is for life and divorce is not permitted, without noticing the growing number of divorces and remarriages taking place within the church. Insiders often observe what is supposed to happen, rather than what does happen.

We often do not notice things that seem to us commonplace. For an insider, much of religion is obvious rather than interesting. It takes an outsider to notice things that differ from other religions, and to try to make sense of these differences.

Insiders are unlikely to put their own religion into a wider context of comparable institutions. The academic brings to his study such broader knowledge, together with an interest in how the institutions fit into their specific social contexts. This broader knowledge sometimes enables the academic to see effects of institutions in social life that are missed by insiders.

The status of insider is not always clear cut. I am currently involved in a small study of a Catholic parish, of which I am a member. I am technically an insider. Yet when I start talking about religion to some members of the parish, I find that their religion is

foreign to me. In the contemporary world, there are so many influences into the way people think that in no two cases is the mix likely to be the same. Any study of the religion of another person is to some extent a study by an outsider. The difference between insiders and outsiders is a matter of degree. The degree can be significant; nevertheless, techniques developed for the understanding of the religion of other cultures can be useful to anyone.

Obviously, familiarity with the culture in which a religion is practiced is an advantage in studying that religion. But equally important is the ability of the researcher to pose and ask questions that will lead to understanding. Ideally, the researcher should be someone who has an insider's familiarity with the data together with an academic training in a variety of perspectives. Even when such an ideal is found, a person's thinking is changed by academic training; consequently the researcher is no longer the insider he or she once was.

The radical response

Post-modern radical empiricism arises out of dissatisfaction with much anthropology on a number of grounds. Authors point to the difficulty in obtaining consensus on theoretical issues, and particularly to cases where two field workers have gone into the same society and have presented radically different pictures of what they saw. But more important is the objection to the way scholars concern themselves with their own academic interests, which are derived outside the societies they are studying. The thinking of the people studied is often explained in intellectualist terms rather than being presented as a plausible view of the world. The argument is that since all our judgements are to some extent subjective, we should not pretend to be objective in anything.

The anthropologist should not assume the superiority of his own point of view over those of the people he studies. All points of view are accepted as perceptions of reality: no-one has the right to reject the perspectives of others. The task of the anthropologist is so to enter the culture of the people concerned that even what at first appears to be bizarre or stupid now falls into place as a valid perspective. The anthropologist must then convey this perspective to his audience.

Radical empiricism is concerned with the study and understanding of cultures different from our own, and pays particular attention to beliefs and practices which can broadly be described as religious. These are the areas in which we find the largest divergences between the different ways in which people understand the world, and this is the area in which intellectualist explanations sometimes belittle foreign ways of thinking and acting.

According to radical empiricists, the beliefs of others are to be seen not as false beliefs to be explained, but as comprising valid perspectives of the world which need to be understood and communicated. In this view, there can be no false religion. Jackson discusses a Kuranko man of Sierre Leone who claimed to be able to turn himself temporarily into an elephant in order to take revenge for an offence.⁴ Jackson points to the fact that such shape shifting is a common theme in folktales with which Kuranko become familiar from childhood onwards. The shape shifter embodies the idea in his own perceptions of himself. Jackson argues that we cannot label the man as deluded. We can identify with his search for autonomy, meaning and control. Jackson goes on to suggest that although the belief contradicts our own sense of what happens, and although there is no possible way of verifying the belief, we can regard it as instrumentally true because it works for the believer.

The first requirement for a proper understanding of a foreign culture is long term immersion in that culture. Paul Stoller⁵ tells of how he was misinformed, and how things were concealed from him, when as a young man he went into Songhay society and asked questions about things that elders had no wish to reveal to him; and how he learnt more on later visits, when he was thoroughly familiar with the language and had established close relationships with a number of people. It is certainly true that you do not usually learn much about a society simply by asking questions during a brief stay. This problem is of concern more to outsiders studying a foreign culture than to Africans studying their own society; nevertheless, the point has relevance for someone wanting to study a religion different from his own in any culture.

Secondly, the immersion must be through full participation, and cannot be achieved if one tries to maintain the status of indepen-

dent observer. The anthropologist needs to avoid the power relations implicit in observation. A relationship of dialogue between equals is advocated, in which the anthropologist does not try to control what is talked about or the way in which it is talked about. The interests and perceptions of the members of the society should dominate the resulting description. This concern against imposing external interests and categories on others is relevant to any scholar interested in studying people.

Social anthropologists have always emphasised a thorough knowledge of a particular society as necessary for the interpretation of the meaning of its religion. A doctoral student is expected to spend over a year in the field, and anthropologists are suspicious of studies based on short visits. Such lengthy immersion into another culture cannot be repeated in many different societies. There is a tension in the study of religions between the need for detailed knowledge on the one hand, and the comparison between different religions on the other. One aspect of this tension is the tension between specialised studies appropriate to theology in particular traditions, and comparative studies of different religions. I shall return to the relationship between theology and the study of religions later. For the moment, I point to the need for detailed knowledge of other cultures if knowledge about their religions is to be taken seriously.

One bias that the anthropologist should avoid is the dominance of word and vision. The academic tradition focuses on what can be said and written down in a systematic way. Religious traditions usually focus on what is done and whom one associates with. Beliefs are usually a reflection on community gatherings and rituals, rather than the reason for them. If we are to present a true account of the society under study, we need to focus not only on what is said, but also on what we observe people doing. Further, we need to pay attention to sounds, smells, tastes, and other sensations.⁶ Religion is not simply a system of beliefs and formal rituals; it comprises events which take place in real, bodily life. An illustration of how such total immersion can affect one's understanding of a religious ritual is presented by Edith Turner, who became so fully immersed in a Ndembu healing ritual that she saw something come out of the body when the healer removed the evil spirit.⁷

The purpose of this kind of participation is to enter the experiences of the people we are studying. The notion of such empathy often conceals dangerous assumptions. Unless we are careful about criteria for assessing the experiences of others, we might easily be satisfied that we have achieved empathy when what we observe fits into our own system of feelings and experiences. It helps to have a thorough and long term immersion into the culture concerned, but an academic can never fully enter into the experience of, for example, being trapped in a declining rural economy, or of being homeless and without income in a city. The scholar's academic training itself produces different perspectives and a different experience from those of the people he or she meets.

Nevertheless, immersion into a foreign society can result in some sharing of experiences, allowing the anthropologist to write a description that evokes a taste of the society concerned, not simply an intellectual comprehension. This kind of description will be presented in narrative form, in which the anthropologist fully discloses his own role in the events which unfold themselves. He or she is now part of the society and part of the story being told.⁸ The observer is also observed. At the same time, the insiders' perspectives are placed in a broader setting.

The anthropologist becomes a story-teller, conveying insights into the society under study through a series of vignettes in which he or she is a part, often emphasising conversations which took place between the ethnographer and other subjects of the study. Even a descriptive narrative involves the author's creative selection and ordering of data to convey a particular point of view. The result is not unlike the way a good novel might give you insights into the way people live and the problems they face. Indeed, some anthropologists point to similarities between anthropology and fiction: a good novel, like Achebe's *When Things Fall Apart*, evokes as well as any anthropological text an understanding of changes introduced by colonial intrusions. Some argue that it is futile to try to distinguish between anthropology and such fiction.⁹

This is going too far. It is true that an anthropological text, like fiction, involves a creative exercise on the part of the author; and that the anthropological text can at best be a partial depiction of reality. Nevertheless, there are clear differences between

anthropology and fiction. In fiction, an author is free to be imaginative and suggestive, presenting a point of view and adjusting material to fit. Presentation and style are as important as the view presented. An academic, whether in social sciences or the study of religions, must be able to base the view presented on data and logic, sometimes to the detriment of style. When Sir James Frazer touched up accounts to make a better story, his practices were rightly rejected by the body of anthropologists.

Different kinds of understanding

At this stage we need to reflect on the kinds of understanding that is conveyed through post-modern radical empiricism.¹⁰ At the most general level, we feel we have understood something when it ceases to be a problem. Something is puzzling until we can fit it in with what we already know. Then it ceases to be a puzzle and we know how to react to it. Somehow it becomes recognisable. Such recognition does not have to be conscious. All or any of the senses may be involved. A series of stimulations is isolated and fitted into one's cognitive system. This is how the nervous system has developed to help animals to survive.

One element of this understanding is fitting the new experience into familiar categories. We find something in the new experience that is similar to something we already know, and so are able to give the puzzling phenomenon a name. When we give something a name, we are able to manage it cognitively.

There are two extremes to be avoided in this process. One is to distort new data, to fit pre-conceived categories: we should rather develop our system of concepts as we meet new data. A second danger is arbitrarily to create new and unnecessary categories. We know of cults that mystify common experiences by dressing them up in some unusual vocabulary, such as the dianetics of Scientology. Perhaps we have come across academic fashions which create a mass of new words, mistaken for new depths of understanding. Whatever the dangers, some system of concepts is essential for knowledge. Categorization, which looks for similarities and differences in the things we experience, has always been central to the development of human knowledge.

Naming is an elementary step in the process of putting something into a more general cognitive scheme. Much religious activity is geared precisely towards this process. People develop ways of examining data in order to fit them into an accepted cognitive system. A person who has a problem they cannot cope with, might well say they do not understand it. "Why did God let this happen to me?" And then they might try reading the Bible until they find a passage which seems to fit the problem: they can now fit what was worrying them into the accepted scheme, and claim to understand.

Even when a new perspective is acquired, it must derive from an older cognitive scheme. It is generally recognised that when religious conversion takes place in Africa, the new religions are understood within the categories of the old. New Christians may still emphasise the need for material well-being,¹¹ or they may still understand diseases in terms of spirits and witches. Traditional religions fed into each other in a similar way in the past.¹² Understanding necessarily involves fitting what is new to the existing patterns of the mind.

When anthropologists meet societies very different from their own, they have to fit the data they come across firstly into patterns that they find intelligible, and secondly into patterns that their readership will find intelligible. They have to make the foreign seem familiar. There is always a danger that when we come across ways and beliefs different from our own, we narrow them down to fit into our accepted cognitive systems rather than expand our own experience to incorporate what others think and do. This is how a positivist anthropologist can lose much of religious experience.

Post-modern radical empiricism aims to describe so accurately and in such detail the experiences of the people under study that outside readers are able to enter these experiences. In this way, the readers may broaden their own perceptions to the extent that what before appeared bizarre is now recognised as natural and familiar.

An example will illustrate the kind of understanding offered. Renato Rosaldo comments on the explanation given by Illongot elders of the Philippines that a head-hunter kills a fellow human being and cuts off the head out of rage, born of grief.¹³ For many years Rosaldo was unable to understand the connection between bereavement, rage and head-hunting, and he tried to find some

intellectual theory that might explain it. Many years later, when his wife died, he understood the rage that results from bereavement, and no longer needed theory to explain the head-hunter's reaction.

From an intellectualist stance, we can observe the physical concomitants of anger: the release of adrenaline in the body, increase in heartbeat, and so on. These comprise an instinctual response when an animal is frustrated or attacked, and is part of our physical capability of survival. In human cultures, the instinctual feelings of anger must frequently be suppressed in order to maintain orderly relations in society. Societies which allow the free expression of anger have to cope with violence between their members. Most of us have at some time in our lives experienced anger arising when we are frustrated, and perhaps feeling angry at someone even when intellectually we know that there is no just cause because the person concerned has acted correctly (albeit not to our convenience). Perhaps not all of us have experienced the severe anger that might arise from the death of someone on whom we rely. But we can understand intellectually how such anger can arise.

So what extra understanding did Rosaldo's own experience of bereavement give him? Firstly, it provided an experience in common with an angry head-hunter, allowing him to recognise the angry response as comprehensible. Through this shared experience, he was able intellectually to accept what previously he had rejected, namely, that bereavement can cause such anger. But why in certain societies has such anger resulted in head-hunting?

There are forms of understanding that the narrative style ignores or rejects. One is the ability to relate events into chains of causes and effects: we say we understand something when we see how it came to be. We cannot claim to predict in detail how particular individuals will respond to any given situation, or indeed how communities will respond. Human behaviour is particularly susceptible to unpredictable, or chaotic, results from a multitude of intermingling variables. Nevertheless, at the macro level we do find patterns of behaviour which result from particular patterns in the environment.

A variety of relations of cause and effect are relevant to the study of human behaviour. At the simplest level, we understand people's behaviour when we know their motives. They choose to act in a

particular way because they expect certain results from this action. This is an important starting point towards understanding behaviour, but it says nothing about hidden psychological and emotional forces that influence people's perceptions of the world and their behaviour in response to it.

Take the example of Xhosa people in South Africa in the middle of the nineteenth century, who wantonly destroyed harvested grain and many of their cattle on which they depended for their livelihood.¹⁴ Their explanation for this action was that a prophetess had told them this was the way to ensure that the ancestors would arise from the dead and drive out the foreign invaders. Outsiders (and a few insiders) did not believe the prophetess and history showed the prophecies to be wrong. Xhosa perceptions of the effects of their actions were wrong. We know from similar movements that they arise in times of economic crisis and helpless frustration. Our ability to enter into the experiences of the people concerned is limited, although we can sympathise with the frustrations that arose from brutal conquest and from the decimation of herds through lung sickness. We can notice the influence of new ideas of resurrection brought in by missionaries, together with older ideas about the powers of spirits. While we know that economic stress does not always result in such movements, we can still perceive the economic and political situation in combination with other things as causes of the religious behaviour we observe. We also notice the disastrous hunger and starvation that resulted from this kind of destructive behaviour. Working out the causes and effects of what we observe is a more attainable form of understanding than entering into the experience of the people.

There is more we can learn from sociological studies of religion than simply a sharing of experiences. Those of us who are interested in the significance of religion in our own societies cannot afford to ignore how it relates to other social institutions. We are interested in how religion relates to differences in wealth and class in society; how it relates to technological changes in such things as health and agriculture; how it relates to education. With widespread alcohol abuse in a society, the relationship between religion and alcohol consumption is of interest. In the face of the AIDS epidemic, it is useful to know how and in what circumstances

religion might affect sexual practices. The artistic impressions of radical empiricism may on occasion speak to such issues, but we also need to know how widespread these impressions remain valid: we need to do some counting.

When we see conflict between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria resulting in loss of lives and the destruction of property, it is not enough to have an experiential appreciation of why they get so angry with each other. When citizens of the country are being hounded out of their communities and driven to suicide in a witch hunt, we cannot be satisfied with a vignette that allows us to understand the community reactions. We need to examine the relationship between religion and conflict in order to determine what steps might be taken to alleviate such conflict.

The need for judgement

This raises the issue of judgements, on which I diverge from many post-modernists. We need to make judgements about different perspectives. If all perspectives are equally valid, why do we need academics? One notices that radical empiricists do not always apply the principle of respect for other people's perspectives to their academic colleagues.¹⁵ They are prepared to make judgements on the views of colleagues, with whom they compete as equals.

Trying to understand someone else's religion has parallels with trying to understand the point of view of another academic. For academics in different disciplines and traditions to understand one another, the first requirement is to listen. We must hear and understand what the other person says before we can judge it. We listen to the other person's argument and try to see how it fits together, and how it fits the data we are discussing. But in this process, we are already making judgements about whether this particular way of perceiving religion works in practice. Ultimately we choose what, if any, aspects of the other person's view to adopt into our own mental framework. What we cannot accept, we sometimes explain in terms of the other person's bias or background.

An academic colleague would find it insulting if you claimed that the only way to understand him is to bracket out all your previous knowledge and all your previous judgements (insofar as this is

possible). It would also be insulting to suggest that as all perspectives are valid perspectives, there are no grounds on which you could possibly criticise his point of view, however different it may be from your own. Academics are concerned to establish the validity of their perceptions, often against alternatives. Parallels apply when we study someone's religion.

The phenomenologist's prescription of the exercise of *epochē* can be accepted only as an instruction to listen. This was an important prescription when the study of religions was introduced in reaction to theologians who simply dismissed other religious traditions. Perhaps the notion of *epochē* has now passed its usefulness. It too easily lends credence to the delusion that you can eliminate your personal bias when you try to understand other people.

We need to distinguish between an open mind and an empty mind. The only way to be totally without prejudice is to be, like an infant, totally without knowledge. The way to move forwards in knowledge is not to remove or discard what we already know, but to use this in such a way that we do not impede progress to new knowledge and new perceptions. Rather than trying to stifle our previous knowledge, we should be admitting it, examining it, and constantly trying to see its limitations. In this way we can genuinely open up our minds to new perceptions.

However debatable our judgements about other cultures may be, we cannot avoid making judgements about our own culture. It has long been a tradition in anthropology that one of the reasons for studying other cultures is to obtain insights into our own.¹⁶ When we see institutions of kinship or politics or religion very different from our own, our assumptions are shaken and we can re-examine our own institutions in a more critical light. We need to take care not to romanticise the foreign cultures, nor to apply their institutions out of context to our own societies. And we need to examine our own institutions carefully: there are a growing number of anthropological studies of middle class European and North American institutions.

G.E. Marcus and M.J. Fischer¹⁷ point out that for comparisons between cultures to be useful, the data from all must rely on thorough ethnography to understand the contexts of the institutions investigated, and the comparisons must be made as between

equals, without assumptions of superiority and inferiority. The study of foreign cultures shows us alternative ways of behaving within our own, and it can suggest alternative ways of behaving in the foreign culture. The critique is provided at both ends. If anthropological critique of cultures is practiced in this way, it is relevant to African studies of African religions.

In some cases, a belief held by the people we study is clearly wrong. It is a common belief of the Mambila of Cameroon that unusually small eggs are laid by cockerels: if one finds such eggs, one is advised to treat them ritually in order to have healthy chickens laying many eggs.¹⁸ We may be able to understand that in normal conditions it is not possible to ascertain which fowl laid which egg, and we can sympathise with the logic that comes to the conclusion that extraordinarily small eggs are laid by cockerels. But if we place Western knowledge of the anatomy of chickens against the Mambila belief, we know that cockerels cannot lay eggs. The Mambila may have wonderful insights into other things, but they are wrong about cockerels laying eggs. Further, technology based on anatomical science is likely to be superior to technology based on such wrong assumptions.

When we move away from technical knowledge and into the realm of religion and moral values, questions of right and wrong, true and false, are not so clear cut. Nevertheless, it is still sometimes necessary to make judgements. In this symposium, Martin Prozesky has rightly expressed concern that Christianity has long-co-existed with apartheid among so many in South Africa. In a post-modern, multi-cultural perspective, the South African ideology of apartheid must be simply another perspective that we must accept: in practice, we condemn it for the injustice it does to many. Similarly, when anger resulting from grief is so uncontrolled as to result in head-hunting, it is not enough to understand such behaviour in which the human rights of the hunted are not respected. When religion results in conflict, or exacerbates existing conflict, we can make a judgement about this kind of religion. When members of a millenarian movement destroy their means of livelihood in the belief that such action will bring in a new age of prosperity, while we may understand their frustrations, we know that their perspective is wrong and will lead to hunger rather than prosperity.

These are extreme cases in which judgement is obviously justifiable. Generally, people do and must make judgements about culture and about religion in particular. In contemporary Africa, we have a number of religions to choose from, and our choices arise from judgements about what different religions offer and how true are their perspectives. Each generation chooses from the culture passed on to it what it wishes to preserve and what it wishes to put aside. The judgements of the younger generation may be disputed by their elders; but each generation makes judgements in matters of culture. In our contemporary plural world, it is impossible to present any set of values that will receive universal acceptance. Nevertheless, cultural criticism, if it is to be constructive, must go beyond negative criticism, and aim to help individuals within that culture to decide on positive values they wish to adopt. Here I go further than such critical anthropologists as Marcus and Fischer appear to allow.¹⁹

Am I now confusing personal and cultural issues with academic issues? While I must make personal judgements governing my own life in my “spare time”, is it necessary or desirable to make such judgements at the academic level?²⁰ Indeed, the study of religions is sometimes opposed to theology precisely in that theology requires some kind of commitment while the study of religions is essentially neutral. Against this view, I find it difficult to distinguish clearly between academic issues and personal or cultural issues. I am culturally an academic. The things I study and the way I study them are determined by my judgements of what is important and useful. To deny that such judgements influence my academic work would be a deception.

The problem is to find criteria for judgements which are acceptable in international academic debate. Clearly, it is not adequate to base such judgements on the scriptural texts of a single culture. We have to try to find broader criteria, such as injustice or some kind of utilitarianism: here we are in the realm of philosophical ethics rather than religious studies or social anthropology. But the difficulty of finding cross-cultural criteria for judgements does not absolve us from the need to try. The academic tradition is an attempt to bring important issues into an international setting, and when different cultures disagree on fundamental values, we need to

find ways of discussing these disagreements rather than dismissing them as irrelevant to our academic enterprise.

In academic life, as in personal affairs, it pays to be sensitive to the feelings of others. In practice, criticism is not constructive unless care is taken over the context and the manner in which it is expressed. To be constructive, criticism requires a relationship of trust between the critic and whoever is being criticised, and a context in which academic debate can be kept distinct from struggles for power. It may be necessary at times to suppress criticism in order to establish such a relationship and such a context: this applies as much to the field work situation as to relations with academic colleagues. It may also be prudent to suppress our first tentative judgements until we can support them with data and arguments. We must also remember that our judgements are always based on limited perspectives, and in that sense must always be tentative and open to criticism. We should not be judgemental in every academic statement we make. But it is healthy to be aware that our academic work is often based on judgements of value, and we should not be afraid to make these explicit when it is appropriate to do so. Further, we should be prepared to discuss judgements of value concerning the religions and cultures we study, when such judgements can be supported by arguments and data.

The problem with certain types of denominational theology is that they do not acknowledge the limitations of human knowledge in all areas. If certain areas of knowledge are regarded as divine rather than human, they are not open to discussion and doubt, and opposing views cannot be respectfully considered. Such a perspective is simply wrong. In such a context, judgements of value are made on the basis of a single tradition, and no attempt is made to find common ground between traditions. Such proscriptions on open enquiry cannot be tolerated in an academic discipline, and the study of religions rightly dissociates itself from them. This kind of theology is not only incompatible with the study of religions, it is bad theology.

To say a religious tradition is wrong in this way is not simply to discard it. Although it may be wrong in limiting its enquiry, the tradition may have valuable insights to offer in other areas. Besides, academic work has a missionary element: we are con-

cerned not only to acquire knowledge and understanding, but also to spread it where possible. The comparative study of religions has an important role in enabling theologians to see beyond the limits of their own religious traditions. Such lessons are more likely to be taken from students of religion who are known to be sympathetic, than from anthropologists who are perceived to be supercilious towards religion.

I have pointed out that we cannot avoid judgements on religious matters in our personal lives. To simply exclude personal judgements from academic discourse is to suggest that they are not important, and that somehow academic discourse deals with something more important than judgements about values. Our personal judgements are relevant to academic debate, and academic debate can affect our personal judgements. Academic debate should make us aware of how limited our perspectives are, what a variety of alternative perspectives are available, and how tentative we have to be in our judgements. If we are aware of our limitations, we can enter into academic debate in an undogmatic way, ready to listen and to learn.

I am arguing that we should make explicit the value judgements behind our academic work. Several times in the conference, the issue was raised of whether in Africa we can afford to promote academic study for its own sake, without reference to its relevance in people's lives. Human thought developed for practical reasons, to give man a superiority over other animals in the fight for survival. It has often been observed that much African ritual and religion is related to immediate practical problems, such as curing sickness or averting famine. This suggests yet another sense in which we can understand something: I understand my illness when I know how to respond to it. Traditional African religions provided such understanding. We might also notice how much of the study of religions in Africa has been performed by missionaries and others who are committed to particular religious traditions. Can we academics afford to seek knowledge as a mere curiosity, with no practical implications? If there are practical implications arising from our knowledge, then judgements about the correctness of different perspectives are necessary.

Early theories of the evolution of thought saw science as the most

advanced form of thought, and religions such as were found in pre-colonial Africa as primitive. Such theories can now be dismissed as naive and ethnocentric. Nevertheless, it is still possible to see that there has been an evolution of values. For example, a concept of human rights has developed through human history: first the rights of citizens in a state were explicated; recently the right of liberty was extended to abolish slavery; this century, rights of workers, of women, of prisoners of war have been established; most recently, the United Nations has produced a charter on the rights of the child. Details may still be disputed, particularly the relationship between rights of individuals and those of the community. Nevertheless, we can see an evolution both in what rights are involved and the extent to which they should be applied. We can judge the contemporary ideas to be more advanced and better than past ideas which allowed for certain people to be held in slavery without even the right to their own lives.

We might also make a case for advances in religious thought. Although it is probably not possible to place particular religions on an evolutionary scale, we can talk about advances in religious knowledge at individual and community levels. In Western societies, we can see progress away from the religious dogmatism that resulted in so many persecutions in European history, and a growing awareness of the symbolic nature of religious thought and practices.²¹

Cultural and religious relativism appears at first sight attractive in a world beleaguered by struggles for power. Such relativism is possible, and desirable, in things like dress and dance groups, which do not materially affect people's lives. But cultural relativism does not apply to technology: the issue in technology is, Does it work? In things that are important, including religion and even the expressive arts, judgements are necessary. When people from different cultures disagree on matters of importance, we need honestly to discuss the issues and to look for common ground on which to base our arguments.

There are problems when we apply this argument to religions. Religion usually incorporates cultural trivia as well as important issues of morality and values. In some traditions people uncover their heads to worship, while in others they deliberately cover their

heads. The important thing is worship. The precise way you worship is important in a particular tradition because it relates to other symbols in that tradition, but it is not likely to be the kind of thing we want to make a value judgement about. It is not intrinsically better to worship with your head covered, or with your head uncovered. The thing we have to guard against is giving undue importance to such trivial issues when we look at other traditions. When early Jesuits in China followed Chinese custom by worshipping with their heads covered, they were criticised by the church authorities and forbidden to continue such irreverent behaviour at Mass. The authorities attached a more important fundamental meaning from their own culture to something that was trivial and unimportant. And this is common error in making judgements.

We can also sometimes regard things as trivial which later become seen as important. The position and roles of women in religions has only recently been seen as an important moral issue. Our judgements of what is important are always liable to be revised. Fear of being wrong should affect the way we hold and apply our judgements; such fear should not prevent us from making them. Revision can only come when an earlier judgement has been made.

We are left in a dilemma. On the one hand, we have to make judgements about religion. On the other hand, we judge to be wrong the ethnocentrism and cultural imperialism that dismisses foreign perspectives as being of no significance. We see what is wrong with religious groups who dismiss all beliefs different from their own and subordinate the interests of others to their own interests. We need to find a way between two extreme positions.

There is no easy way out of this dilemma. Perhaps it is possible for institutions to be neutral on matters of religion, in that they provide access for a variety of personal views. It is less easy to see how scholars can be neutral. Where such neutrality is claimed, must it not be some kind of pretence? At least at the personal level, we have to make judgements about systems of belief and about religious perceptions. We have to decide which ones to adopt personally—even if we decide to adopt an atheistic and materialist perspective. The question is: how do our own personal judgements affect academic studies and academic debate?

When I teach the Sociology of Religion, I have two principle aims. The first is to teach students to respect the beliefs of others. The lessons of post-modern radical empiricism can be very helpful towards this end. Secondly, I provide a broad base of data and ideas, in order to enable students to make their own judgements about their religious practices, beliefs and values. This requires more than literary narratives. It would be naive to think such a presentation can be without bias, but one can attempt to present a variety of views as accurately as possible, in order to avoid imposing one's own perspective on others.

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¹ The interpretive tradition was developed especially by C. Geertz (see Geertz 1973). Recent post-modernist works include: Clifford & Marcus 1986, Clifford 1988, Jackson 1989, Marcus & Fischer 1986.

² See Mudimbe 1988.

³ For a brief, systematic discussion of the limitations of informants' accounts, see Fardon 1990: 4-13.

⁴ Jackson 1989, chapter 7: 'The man who could turn into an elephant'.

⁵ See Stoller 1989: 125-129.

⁶ See Stoller 1989, especially chapters 6 and 7: 'Sound in Songhay possession' and 'Sound in Songhay sorcery'.

⁷ See Turner *et al.* 1992.

⁸ For examples of this style, see Turner *et al.* 1992; Stoller 1987.

⁹ See the final chapter of Jackson 1989: 'On ethnographic truth'. Also his ethnographic novel, Jackson 1986.

¹⁰ O'Meara (1989: 363) argues that anthropologists using an interpretative and narrative approach conflate six different types of understanding and meaning into an all-embracing symbolic meaning. While I am not concerned with detailed enumeration, I find his argument substantially sound.

¹¹ See Okorocha 1987.

¹² See, for example, James 1988.

¹³ Rosaldo 1984: 178-179.

¹⁴ See Peires 1989.

¹⁵ See Davis 1992.

¹⁶ For a full discussion of this topic, see Marcus & Fischer 1986.

¹⁷ Marcus & Fischer 1986, chapter 6: 'Two contemporary techniques of cultural critique in anthropology'.

¹⁸ See Zeitlyn 1991.

¹⁹ Marcus & Fischer 1986: 167. I take courage for my view from the attempt by an American team of social scientists to provide a philosophy concerning the value of individualism in American life. See Bellah *et al.* 1985.

²⁰ See Pye 1991.

²¹ I find broadly convincing the evolutionary model outlined by Bellah (1964).

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THE STUDY OF YORUBA RELIGIOUS TRADITION IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE*

JACOB K. OLUPONA

Summary

This essay presents an overview of past and recent scholarship in Yoruba religion. The earliest studies of Yoruba religious traditions were carried out by missionaries, travellers and explorers who were concerned with writing about the so called "pagan" practices and "animist" beliefs of the African peoples. In the first quarter of the 20th century professional ethnologists committed to documenting the Yoruba religion and culture were, among other things, concerned with theories about cosmology, belief-systems, and organizations of *Oriṣà* cults. Indigenous authors, especially the Reverend gentlemen of the Church Missionary Society, responded to these early works by proposing the Egyptian origin of Yoruba religion and by conducting research into *Ifá* divination system as a *preparatio evangelica*. The paper also examines the contributions of scholars in the arts and the social sciences to the interpretation and analysis of Yoruba religion, especially those areas neglected in previous scholarship. This essay further explores the study of Yoruba religion in the Americas, as a way of providing useful comparison with the Nigerian situation. It demonstrates the strong influence of Yoruba religion and culture on world religions among African diaspora. In the past ten years, significant works on the phenomenology and history of religions have been produced by indigenous scholars trained in philosophy and *Religionswissenschaft* in Europe and America and more recently in Nigeria. Lastly, the essay examines some neglected aspects of Yoruba religious studies and suggests that future research should focus on developing new theories and uncovering existing ones in indigenous Yoruba discourses.

Introduction

The study of African religions is gradually undergoing a new phase, characterized by a departure from general continental surveys to more emphasis on regional, national, and ethnic studies. Indeed, it is becoming increasingly fashionable to depart from the general survey and acknowledge the diversity and plurality of Africa's cultural mosaic. In this paper I intend to present a detailed survey of the state of scholarship in the indigenous religious traditions of one such group, the Yoruba of Nigeria. The Yoruba, who number more than 30 million people and inhabit South-Western

Nigeria, Togo, and Benin, are one of the three major ethnic groups of Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation. They are also the most studied ethnic group in Africa. Indeed, the prominence of Yoruba Studies in scholarly work is underscored by the prominence of their arts, music, religion and oral literature, all of which have received adequate scholarly investigation.

A survey of the entire breadth of scholarship on Yoruba religion would require a vastness and breadth that cannot be achieved in the context of this paper. My purpose here, therefore, is to attempt an outline of major trends in the study of Yoruba religion, to present a summary and critique of essential works, discussing theoretical and methodological issues as they arise, and to assess the contextual significance of the works. I would also map out neglected areas of study for future research.

Two preliminary observations. First, the study of Yoruba religion has concerned African and Western scholars alike, and any survey of this scholarship must attempt to integrate both. Second, in Yoruba society and culture, as in many other African societies, religion and culture are linked so much so that there cannot be a pure history of religions (*Religionswissenschaft*) approach or perspective without due consideration to cognate disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. Scholars in Yoruba studies from the disciplines of art history, literature, sociology, anthropology and political science have contributed to our understanding of Yoruba religious worldview and its relations to the Yoruba culture and society as much as those within the regular religious studies fields.

The Beginnings: Missionaries, Travellers and Explorers

We begin our survey in the late 19th century. The earliest accounts of Yoruba religious beliefs and practices were produced by missionaries, travellers and explorers. Some of these people proceeded to Yoruba country to confirm their previously held accounts about “pagan” worship and animist beliefs among the African peoples. Whatever their motives, they came, observed and wrote their memoirs, which testified to the glamor of the ancient Yoruba kingdom. Among such earlier writings were Robert A. Stone's *In African Forest and Jungle or Six Years Among The Yorubas*.¹ Also Miss

Tucker's² and M. A. S. Barber's³ works were travellers' accounts of the Yoruba people. They gave edifying descriptions and reports of Yoruba cultural life. However, of all these various accounts, four authors deserve particular mention because of the significance of their work to the modern study of Yoruba religion. They are Alfred Ellis,⁴ Leo Frobenius,⁵ W. H. Clarke⁶ and T. J. Bowen.⁷ Ellis was a British officer, Frobenius a German explorer/anthropologist and W. H. Clarke and T. J. Bowen were Baptist missionaries.

Leo Frobenius is often cited as the first anthropologist who drew the attention of the scholarly world to the ancient Ilé-Ifé (terracotta) art. When he made his visit to Ilé-Ifé the sacred city of the Yoruba people in 1910, he informed the German press of his discovery of traces of a Greek colony on the Atlantic coast of Africa. The Ifé arts were of such superb quality, that Frobenius thought they could not have been the creation of the Black race. However, the subsequent works of Frobenius contain several interesting accounts of prehistoric Yoruba religious culture. These works contain myths, legends and tales of Yoruba gods and goddesses. Some of the most profound narratives in these works—such as myths and proverbs about the origin of death—are no longer available to us in oral forms. If we could divest the Westerner's biases and errors from their interpretations of the accounts which they otherwise recorded so faithfully, it seems to me that we could make a historical reconstruction of the state of Yoruba religion in the 19th century.

The 19th century was certainly a crucial period, it witnessed the Muslim Jihadists' invasion of Yoruba country, the collapse of old Oyó empire, and indeed a noticeable interaction between Islam and traditional religion. It seems to me that a crucial question for us is to what extent were the accounts of these early observers based on informants' testimony which had already been influenced by Islamic beliefs and practices. This is important to us in clarifying the debate that would later ensue between indigenous authors and their critics. The indigenous authors, such as J. Olumide Lucas and Bolaji Idowu, who wrote the first set of scholarly works on Yoruba religion were accused of presenting a christocentric version of Yoruba religion with an overblown conception of Olódùmarè (the Supreme Being).

We are indebted to Profs. Ayandele and Atanda for editing the works of two American Baptist missionaries who were undoubtedly superb students of Yoruba culture, Clarke and Bowen. Clarke was fascinated by Yoruba culture. He devoted his entire memoirs to documenting it. As he himself noted this work was primarily to produce “narrations and descriptions of the [Yoruba] people”⁸ and only passing references to mission works would be made. Like other writers around this period, he was perplexed about and concerned with the relationship between the Supreme Being and the myriads of *Orìṣà* (deities). As such Clarke remarked that the Yoruba people “are rather a peculiar heathen”.⁹ He also characterized them as “refined heathens” for they have knowledge of a Supreme God who is approached through “a number of inferior deities who bear the relation of mediator between the creature and God.”¹⁰

In the first quarter of the 20th century more ethnologists continued to write about Yoruba religion. Like the previous works, the relationship between the *Orìṣà* cults and the Supreme Being dominated their discussions. Three authors should be mentioned here, R. E. Dennett (1910),¹¹ P. A. Talbot (1936)¹² and S. S. Farrow (1926).¹³ J. Omoṣade Awolalu¹⁴ has written a fine critique of this early scholarship especially concerning their theories about theistic beliefs among Yoruba people. Perhaps what is significant about these works was that they were all interested in producing a general ethnography of Yoruba people in which religion was obviously central.

Indigenous Responses: Egyptologists and Ifá School

The publication of Venerable J. Olumide Lucas’ book *Religion of the Yorubas*¹⁵, marks another epoch in Yoruba religion scholarship. Lucas, the first indigene to write about Yoruba religion was an acclaimed Egyptologist in his life time, and perhaps the only intellectual among the Anglican clergy in his time. Through painstaking research, he wrote that the Yoruba religion had its origin in Ancient Egypt which he regarded as the center of World Civilization. The significance of Lucas’ work is not so much in the language affinity he proved to obtain between Ancient Egyptian religion and Yoruba culture, but more in the use to which the work

was put long after it was written. The book now belongs to a larger school of thought gaining ground in Africa and in the United States called variously “negritude”, “Afro-centricism” and “Africanism.” Afro-centricism, according to one of its chief proponents, Molefe Ashante, is an attempt to “reestablish the centrality of the ancient Kemetic (Egyptian) civilization and the Nile Valley cultural complex as points of reference for African perspective in much the same way as Greece and Rome serve as reference points for the European world.”¹⁶ Lucas has been criticized by several scholars including W. R. Westcott¹⁷ and Geoffrey Parrinder.¹⁸ The latter observed that Egyptian influence on Yoruba religion is probably impossible since “ancient Egyptians do not seem to have expanded their religious ideas even to nearby peoples.”¹⁹

As we observed earlier, the late 19th century and the early 20th century were important periods in the history of the West African coast. As more and more indigenous missionaries were trained to evangelize their own people, emphasis was laid on the literary and linguistic study of African culture. Yoruba language had a significant place in the scale of things around this period. Through the efforts of Samuel Ajayi Crowther, a Yoruba freed slave who was trained at Fourahbay college, Sierra Leone, and who later became the first African bishop from West Africa, Yoruba was reduced to writing and the Bible was also translated into Yoruba language. This period also witnessed a direct contact of missionaries with Yoruba traditional religion and its adherents. Before long the missionaries noticed the presence and significance of the *Babaláwo*, the priests diviners of *Ifá*, the Yoruba God of wisdom and also *Èṣù*, god of the gate keeper, the divine policeman and conveyor of sacrifices. For the missionaries to be successful they had to render implausible not only the structure of Yoruba religious worldview, but indeed, they had to destroy the entire basis for divination and sacrifices. The missionaries therefore engaged in polemical debates with traditional priest-diviners and their devotees. Popular songs and lyrics were composed to teach a Christian counter-position to traditional beliefs. For example, *Èṣù* was portrayed as a devil, whose house is the road-junction and the one who demands for the most prized possession of his clients for sacrifice (*Onilé orita, aṣo Ìtélè àpóti*). In the

same vogue, *Ifá* as ‘a system of explanation, prediction and control’ of space-time events was particularly attacked. The claim of *Babaláwo* to resuscitate the dead was challenged; a popular Christian missionary lyric which says: *Ení kú ki nísòrò, ènyin onífá, e ló tuń fá se, eníkú ki nísòrò* (the dead do not speak, the diviners should reexamine their claims of waking up the dead).²⁰

As a more relevant response to the social influence of the *Ifá* priests and their cults, some indigenous Christian priests decided to study the *Ifá* divination system and write about its theology and poetry as a *preparatio evangelica*. This response led to the publication of a body of local literature on *Ifá*, similar in popularity to the Nigerian Onitsha market literature. Examples of this form of literature are E. M. Lijadu’s two significant texts, *Ifá*²¹ and *Orunímilà*.²² The purpose of Lijadu’s two books was to show how inadequate Yoruba religious ideas were to the would be converts. It was the first text in our field to use a comparative religion approach. Lijadu put side by side selected passages from the Bible and *Ifá* poetry. He wrote that unless research is made into Yoruba religion, its enduring influence on the “pagan” population would not be appreciated. He blamed mission workers for underestimating the power and influence of traditional priests (*Babaláwo*) just because they lack sacred literature (*Iwé*), forgetting that it takes several years of training before a *Babaláwo* is ordained a priest. Rev. S. C. Phillips (later Bishop) wrote the foreword to this book and made some interesting remarks. Attributing the success of Paul to the Apostle’s prior training under Galiel and in Greek philosophy at Tarsus (sic, Paul studied with Galiel in Jerusalem), Phillips said that missionary work had not had the desired impact on the “pagans” because the clergy did not take the time to study the traditional religion of the people, an indication that the conversion rate to Christianity was low. Furthermore, he remarked that when the diviners discovered that *Ifá* divination poetry could be read from a textbook, such as Lijadu has just produced, they would be anxious to go to school and compare the *Ifá* thought system and poetry with the Bible. Following Lijadu’s lead, Rev. David Epega published his own book *Ifá Amónà Áwọn Baba Wa, Jesu Kristi Amónà Wa*.²³ [Literally *Ifá* our forefathers’ Savior god and Jesus Christ our Savior], also an attempt to show the superiority of Christian salvation to traditional religion.

In response to these publications, some young energetic literate Yoruba trained in mission schools but apparently remaining faithful to Yoruba religious tradition, began to defend the *Ifá* system against the despisers of their culture. These religious nationalists recorded and compiled *Ifá* corpus, though in piecemeal fashion, from diviners. They interpreted these texts as the holy scripture of the Yoruba people at par with the Quran and the Bible. This new cultural revivalism led to the publication of several pamphlets and monographs on *Ifá*, mainly in Yoruba language. Indeed between 1920-1960, not less than twenty of such texts produced by local presses had appeared on the market. Among these authors are Fela Sowande,²⁴ Elisha Kenyo,²⁵ A. Fagbenro Beyioku²⁶ and T. A. J. Ogunbiyi.²⁷ These researches and publications opened up the way for the scholarly study of *Ifá* civilization championed by William Bascom and Wande Abimbola a few years later.

Ibadan School: 1949 Onward

In the meantime, the University College of Ibadan, a campus of London University was established in Ibadan city. It is to the credit of the founding fathers that a degree in religious studies rather than divinity was established, the first in the British Commonwealth.²⁸ The emphasis on religious studies was an attempt to give emphasis to the study of African traditional religion rather than to a pure theology program. The pioneering works of Geoffrey Parrinder at the new department of religious studies remained unsurpassed. Although his research and writing covered the entire continent, his focus nevertheless was on Yoruba religion²⁹ to a greater extent than any scholar of comparative religion today. However, it was Bolaji Idowu who laid the foundation for what we may now call the Ibadan school, whose primary research emphasis was on beliefs, and theistic conceptions which gained wide influence on the study of Yoruba religion down to the present time. Idowu's *Olódùmarè, God in Yoruba Beliefs*³⁰ is perhaps the most weighty work on Yoruba traditional religion accessible to us today. It was written at a time when Africans were claimed not to have a knowledge of God as is often reflected in the widely quoted phrase "how can the untutored Africans believe in God."³¹ Idowu draws heavily on oral traditions,

proverbs, myths, oral poetry and the *Ifá* divination corpus to establish his position that Olódùmarè, the Yoruba supreme God, is far from being a remote God, rather, he is the one essential factor by which the life, and beliefs of the Yoruba people were centered.³² Idowu equally emphasizes the concept of *Orìṣà* (divinities) that occupy the world of the living and to whom daily rituals of sacrifice are offered. He regards them as manifestations of the Supreme Being. On the basis of the above, Idowu came to the conclusion that Yoruba traditional religion can best be described as “diffused monotheism”. Idowu’s interpretation is highly theological for he emphasizes beliefs and very often clothes the Yoruba worldview in Christian garments. Idowu’s work and other similar works have been criticized for this interpretation,³³ and some scholars have also come to their defense.³⁴ As the University of Ibadan became the center of religious studies in Nigeria, Bòlaji Idowu’s students spread to other centers of academic learning in Nigeria. Several excellent ethnographic Ph.D. theses on different aspects of Yoruba religion were produced by these students at Ibadan University. Unfortunately most of these works are inaccessible to us because they were never published.³⁵ The enduring influence of this school on Yoruba religious studies can still be felt and here one must mention the works of J. Omoṣade Awolalu who inherited Idowu’s chair and whose book³⁶ is an important addition to the existing literature and Samuel A. Adewale’s general survey of Yoruba religion.³⁷

Yoruba Religion and Oral Literature

The study of Yoruba oral literature, which was already gaining ground in Nigerian universities since independence, brought about a decisive influence on the study and understanding of Yoruba religious culture. There is virtually no other ethnic group in Africa that has enjoyed such in-depth research into its oral literature as the Yoruba people. Although the primary focus of these works by and large has been the linguistic and literary features of the various genres of oral poetry, nevertheless, sizeable numbers of the materials have religious motifs. Of the various genres of Yoruba oral poetry, those that have had the most impact on Yoruba religion are *Oríki* (praise poetry) *Eṣe Ifá* (*Ifá* divination poetry), *Ijálá* (the

poetry of hunters and devotees of *Ògun*, god of iron and war), *Iwì* (the poetry of Eguñguń ancestors masquerades), *Ofè* or *Ohùn* (magical incantation poetry). I will discuss the relevant works in each category.

Iwì, Eguñguń chants, are the verbal arts connected with the cult of the dead ancestors (*Eguñguń*) believed to have descended to the world of the living in order to celebrate with their descendants. The two most authoritative scholars on *Iwì* oral poetry, are Oludare Olajubu³⁸ and Olatunde Olatunji.³⁹ *Iwì* poetry contains salutations “to the sacred power in the Yoruba cosmos,”⁴⁰ such as Olódùmarè, the Supreme Being, principal deities, leaders of the Eguñguń cults, medicine men and witches. The poetry also contains significant information on prayers, songs, proverbs and incantations,⁴¹ which obviously have relevant religious references. *Oríkì*, praise epithets of individuals, lineages and deities have been better researched than *Iwì*, and indeed their relevance to the study of Yoruba religion has enjoyed some treatment. Among important authors on *Oríkì* are Ulli Beier,⁴² and Karin Barber. In an article, Karin Barber⁴³ discusses the significance of *Oríkì Òrìṣà* (praise poetry of the gods) for the understanding of Yoruba religion. Indeed she noted that *Oríkì* is “the principal oral genre involved in propitiation and characterization of Òrìṣà”, prior, in her view, to *Ìtàn*, narrations or myths about the deity. Barber is of the view that *Oríkì*, unlike other genres, “capture and evoke the essential characteristics of the subjects...and have the most profound and intimate access to its inner nature.”⁴⁴ However, the most valuable research on *Oríkì* is Barber’s recently published book,⁴⁵ which provides an anthropological and literary study of *Oríkì* in Òkukù, a Yoruba town.

Research into the *Ifá* divination system and its literature has had a noteworthy effect on Yoruba studies. The works of William Bascom⁴⁶ and Wande Abimbola⁴⁷ can be cited here as providing an enduring legacy to Yoruba religious studies. As we observed earlier in this paper, *Ifá* study dates back to the 19th century. *Ifá* divination is a highly complex system of geomancy. With a divining chain (*òpèlé*) or with sixteen sacred nuts (*ikin*) the diviner arrives at a specific signature (*Odù*) for his clients. Each *Odù* contained hundreds of verses (*ese Ifá*) which made up the entire corpus of *Ifá* oral

poetry. *Eṣe Ifá* is the most detailed form of Yoruba religious texts. It has been described as the storehouse of information about Yoruba mythology and cosmology. For one thing research into *Ifá* texts has provided a possible alternative view to the theological works produced by Ibàdàñ school. Although there is a tendency by *Ifá* scholars to privilege it over other aspects of *Ōrisà* tradition and indeed to see it as governing and regulating the life of the other Yoruba deities. Nevertheless, the *Ifá* corpus is unsurpassed by any other *Ōrisà* literary corpus. In addition to the works of Abimbola and Bascom other significant but less known works on Ifá divination are Raymond Prince, Judith Gleason,⁴⁸ and E. M. McClelland.

Ijálá, the poetry devoted to *Óguín*'s worship by hunters and his devotees, is also an important source of Yoruba religions. Because of *Óguín*'s significance as a god of war and hunting, he has the largest number of devotees. His annual festivals are occasions when hunters, warriors, and other devotees engage in *Ijálá* chanting as a source of entertainment and devotion to the deity. Adeboye Babalòla,⁴⁹ whose works have influenced several other younger scholars, has devoted his entire research to *Ijálá* genre of oral poetry. Several of his publications attest to the nature and popularity of the *Óguín* deity in Yoruba religious life and culture. Closely related to *Ijálá* is *Óguín*'s *Iremoje*, oral poems chanted at funeral ceremonies to honor deceased hunters. These chants not only focus on the devotees ideas about *Óguín*, medicine, and hunting, but also about the ancestor world. Bade Ajuwon's works⁵⁰ on *Iremoje* among the *Oyó-Yorùbá* provide us with insight into their religious and social significance.

The last genre of oral poetry relevant to the interpretation of Yoruba religious studies is *Oṣò* (incantations). Also called *Ògèdè* or *Ohun* (the spoken powerful words or “performative utterances”) they are words which make things come to pass. They invoke immediate action, negative or positive, depending on their usage. They are of restrictive use and as such they are the most difficult form of poetry to investigate. However, their importance in Yoruba cultural life has been recognized by Pierre Verger and Olatunde Olatunji. Verger has examined the use of *Oṣò* in Yoruba medicine making. His monograph *Àwọn Ewé Òsanyin* (literally,

Osanyiñ's herbal leaves but which he translated as *Yoruba medicinal plants*) remains a useful reference text until today. Verger noted that in traditional medicine, the knowledge of *Ofo* is essential and not just the knowledge of the scientific name of the leaves used and their pharmacological characteristics. In those *Ofo* transmitted orally, we find "definition of the action expressed of each of the plants entering in the composition of the recipe."⁵¹ Also Olatunji noted that *Ofo* is more than just a source of Yoruba religious literature. It is indeed an aspect worthy of further investigation.⁵² He further observed that as "the verbal" aspect of magical action, they go hand in hand with rituals and medicines.

We certainly cannot examine here all genres of Yoruba oral poetry related to religion. It is sufficient to say that nearly all the active *Orisà*⁵³ have their own genre which combines praise chants with mythical, ritualistic and symbolic references. The contribution of oral literature to the interpretation of Yoruba religions is vast, and it is hoped that students of religion would take active interest in the analysis of Yoruba oral traditions so that we could have a more composite image of the tradition.

The task of capturing the essence of Yoruba religious tradition in literature has also been undertaken by several authors. Yoruba literary authors seem to deal more with religious than with secular themes. The classic works of Daniel O. Fagunwa⁵⁴ and Wole Soyinka⁵⁵ portray deep understanding of Yoruba religious worldview which even some of the best works in religion cannot match. Regrettably students of religion shy away from these works. As an example of these texts, take Soyinka's *Myth, Literature, and the Afrian World* where he discussed the nature and functions of Yoruba myths about the *Orisà*. In this classic, Soyinka protested against the violent, destructive image of *Ogún* that forms the central theme of popular literature and even serious academic studies.⁵⁶ Based on the deity's praise-chants and other textual evidence, Soyinka characterized *Ogún* as "protector of orphans, roof over the homeless, terrible guardian of the sacred occult. *Ogún* stands for transcendental, humane, but rigidly restorative, justice."⁵⁷ Wole Soyinka provides an interpretation that would make the deity more intelligible to the modern mind. Undoubtedly, *Ogún* is a paragon of judicial virtues, an area in which he is most powerful among deities; he left

no one in doubt about the fearlessness of his judicial decisions, once taken. Whereas most scholars have viewed *Òguní* from the Judeo-Christian perspective in which justice and violence are mutually exclusive, the two exist together in Yoruba thought. Even among educated Yoruba, those who would easily swear a false oath upon the Bible or Quran would hesitate to swear a similar oath upon *Òguní*'s ritual objects, even a fountain pen, which is indicative of *Òguní*'s adaption to the contemporary work situation. They would hesitate to swear a false oath on such objects because they have not ceased to believe in the reality of *Òguní*, even though they now maintain a post-traditional religion or a Judeo-Christian or Islamic world view. There is a strong belief even among the educated Yoruba that while it takes the God of the Bible or Quran a long time to act against sinners and offenders (as both Gods suspend sentences pending a sinner's repentance), the judgement of *Òguní* is swift and certain.

Art History and Yoruba Religion

Next, I would like to examine the contribution of art historians to the interpretation of Yoruba religion. We shall be concerned here with what is often called visible religion, or iconography of religion. As we mentioned earlier on, the highly publicized fieldwork of Leo Frobenius in Ilé-Ifé set the stage for the beginning of a long tradition of excavation of artifacts and the study of Yoruba visual arts in general. Today, Yoruba artistic study has become one of the most developed art history disciplines in the entire continent. The available literature is vast, and it is impossible to provide a survey of the scholarship here. What I shall be concerned with are those specific works, especially in the past fifty years or so, which have most illuminated our knowledge of Yoruba religion. A central feature of these works is that their authors were as concerned with the style and aesthetic formal aspects of the arts as they were with their religious functions and symbolic meanings. I will be concerned with works relating to *Ifá* art objects, *Ère-Ìbejì*, sacred twins arts, *Egungún* and *Géledé* masking traditions, *Ogbóni* secret society, ideology and rituals of kingship, and arts relating to death and immortality.

Three general works provide useful reference materials. Willet's work on Ilé-Ifé sculpture,⁵⁸ Fagg and Pemberton⁵⁹ on *Yoruba Sculpture of West Africa*, and Drewal, Pemberton and Abiodun's *Yoruba: Nine Centuries of African Arts and Thought*.⁶⁰ In addition to these three works, several catalogues produced in conjunction with museum exhibitions in different parts of Europe and America carry brief descriptive analyses of different aspects of art works related to Yoruba religion.

Ifá art objects are one of the enigmas of Yoruba artistic creativity. The chief emblems of the *Ifá* cult are the divination tray (*Opon Ifá*), the tapper (*Irókè*) and the divining chain (*Opelè*). Several of these *Ifá* art objects, produced over a period of many centuries, are scattered all over the world in private homes and public museums, and have become subjects of intense study and interpretation by art historians. Here should be mentioned the works of Roland Abiodun,⁶¹ Elizabeth McClelland⁶² and Henry Drewal.⁶³ Abiodun interprets *Ifá* art objects in the light of oral sources, proverbs, myths and most essentially *Ifá* verses. Drewal focused on the description and the symbolic interpretation of *Ifá* ritual objects. McClelland's book devotes some sections to examining the relationship between arts and religion in the *Ifá* cult. Margaret Drewal and Henry Drewal's joint essay attempts to focus on a diviner's sacred shrine in Ijebú in a detailed study.⁶⁴ In addition to *Ifá*, all the principal *Oríṣà* have forms of artistic expressions mainly portrayed as ceremonial objects or objects depicting their power and essence. Through detailed analysis of these objects with a focus on their functions and meanings, scholars have been able to come to a better understanding of several *Oríṣà* traditions. Here I should mention Roland Abiodun's two essays⁶⁵ on *Orí*, a significant but less well-known Yoruba deity of destiny and self. The first is a descriptive interpretation of the worship of *Orí* and its artistic forms and the second attempts to use both verbal and visual metaphors to interpret the mythic and ritualistic dimensions of this deity. Babatunde Lawal's⁶⁶ essay also relates the importance of *Orí* to the general Yoruba sculptural tradition. The arts of *Sangó*, the Yoruba god of thunder and lightning have also been studied. Westcott and Morton-Williams⁶⁷ were perhaps the first scholars to examine in an article the symbolism and visual context of *Lábá-ṣangó*. Lawal's Ph.D.

thesis and subsequent essay also focused on the components and forms of *Sangó* sculpture.⁶⁸ Margaret Drewal⁶⁹ who has been concerned with the significance of arts in performance, examined the relationship between art and trance among a group of *Sangó* devotees. Pemberton's article on *Èshù-Elégbá*⁷⁰ examined the role of this deity as a trickster.

The ideology and rituals of kingship were the most dominant theme in the works of earlier art historians in Yoruba studies. Several of these scholars focused on the interpretation of the deep symbolism imbedded in the king's insignia, especially the crown (*adé*) and swords (*idà*) of office. Ulli Beier⁷¹ discussed the sacred regalia of Òlokukù, the *Oba* (King) of a Yoruba town in Oyó state. Susan Blier examined the Obálùfòn royal arts in Ilé-Ifé.⁷² More recently, Titi Euba⁷³ has examined the *Arè*, the sacred crown the *Ooni* of Ifé wore ritually once a year during the Olójó festival of *Ogun*, the Yoruba god of iron and war. John Pemberton's⁷⁴ research has focused on the Igborinà kingship system, while Roy Poyner⁷⁵ wrote a piece on the Owò ivory sword, *Udàmalóre*. Robert Farris Thompson⁷⁶, has provided several works on Yoruba sacred kingship, which include beaded crowns and the symbolism of veiling and of sacred birds, two prominent features of Yoruba crowns.

Yoruba masking traditions have produced significant data for research into beliefs about the dead, the ancestors and witchcraft. *Egungún* masquerades for the ancestors constitute the most popular of these masking traditions. Poyner's⁷⁷ study on the *Egungún* of Owò, Pemberton's⁷⁸ on the *Egungún* of Ilá Órañguń, and Margaret Drewal and Henry Drewal on those of Egbádò⁷⁹ are some of the available studies that touch on religion. Also one should mention the Drewals'⁸⁰ insightful study on *Géledé* masks. The masks celebrate the spiritual powers of "our mothers": elderly women and witches. From Drewals' studies, we now have a better understanding of witches and witchcraft among western Yoruba people. Witchcraft emerges not as something inherently evil but as a neutral force which can be used for both benevolent and malevolent ends. Another area of interest to art historians is the secret societies of which the most well-known is *Ogbóni* or *Óṣùgbó*. Although, the iconography of these cult groups have been the main interest of

scholars; nevertheless our knowledge of the religious and social functions mainly come from these studies. Th. A. H. M. Dobbelmann's⁸¹ studies focus on the forms and function of the cult objects. Jerome R. O. Ojo⁸² has been concerned with the drums used in *Ogbóni* rituals. And Hans Witte⁸³ examined the conceptions of the earth deity and the ancestors in their relationship to *Ogbóni* iconography.

Focus on belief in life after death remains a central aspect of Yoruba religious studies. The city state of ṁwò presents a unique tradition of second burial effigy *Ákó*, which has also been the focus of recent studies. Three studies have contributed to a lively discussion of this tradition, Willet,⁸⁴ Abiodun⁸⁵ and Poyner⁸⁶.

Research into *Ère Ìbeji* (sacred twins images) has also engaged the attention of art scholars. *Ère Ìbeji* are often commissioned by mothers of twins to serve as substitutes for their deceased children (death of twins was quite common). The Yoruba people have one of the highest twin birth rate in the world. Available statistics indicate that they have 45.1 births per 1,000.⁸⁷ Houlberg,⁸⁸ Robert Thompson⁸⁹ and several others have produced well illustrated articles on *Ìbeji* images and a conference on *Ère Ìbeji* organized by Ekpo Eyo in 1982 at the University of Maryland produced several fine papers on the significance of the myths, rituals and arts of these sacred beings. Lamide Fakéye,⁹⁰ for example, focused on the rituals and taboos relating to the commissioning and carvings of *Ìbeji* figures.

Lastly, representations of women in Yoruba religious arts have received attention lately. Abiodun⁹¹ has contributed two essays to the interpretation of the symbolism of the females in Yoruba arts and religion. Drewal and Drewal's works on *Gèlèdé* cited earlier (note 80) also focus on female power as shown in the *Gèlèdé* masking tradition. We may add here studies on rituals and performance. Omofolabó Soyinka-Ajayi has examined dance in the rituals of the *Oríṣá*⁹² and is also preparing a book manuscript, a substantial part of which will focus on religious dances in *Obàtálá* and *Šàngó* worship.⁹³ Margaret Drewal's recent book on performance in Yoruba rituals is a significant contribution to the field.⁹⁴

From the above we can see that the study of Yoruba visible religion by art historians has brought decisive changes in our

perspective on the study of Yoruba religion. Scholars in verbal and visual arts have covered some of the long neglected areas and aspects of Yoruba religious spirituality. Without these works, our knowledge about important aspects of Yoruba beliefs such as witchcraft, *Ogbóni* secret society, and *Ifá* mystical tradition would have been very scanty. Traditionally, students of religion in Nigeria consider these areas very difficult and, indeed, too sensitive to investigate. These are areas of field research where even the initiated fear to tread. The art historian's ability to study images related to these beliefs and practices, supplemented with interpretation of verbal oral narrations is a significant contribution to our field. As a result of the several works cited above we can now reexamine the development and growth of several *Oríṣà* cults and account for the diffusion from their places of origin to other areas in Yoruba land.

Social Science and the Study of Yoruba Religion

A history of the study of Yoruba religious traditions must recognize the contribution of sociologists and anthropologists to the literature. Two periods mark the work of these scholars: the colonial period and the last ten years or so. The first period was characterized by ethnologists and anthropologists from Britain and America. Several of the British scholars were connected with the colonial government and had influenced the gathering of intelligence reports in the colonies. Perhaps I should state right here that these intelligence reports are not necessarily classified documents but that they contain very useful information about the cultural and social life of the people among whom the British investigators lived. They constitute useful secondary sources to students of Yoruba religion who are interested in reconstructing the history of the cults and religious groups in the different regions. Most of these scholars published their research in *Africa*, still the leading journal of African studies in Britain. Here we would cite the works of Peter Lloyd, William Bascom, and Peter Morton-Williams.

At first these scholars were mainly interested in writing general ethnographic monographs on the social structure, laws, kingship

system and economic life of the Yoruba. They ultimately worked on several cult organizations, such as *Ògbóni* society, and Eguñúñ masquerades. Perhaps the leading figures among these ethnologists were William Bascom and Peter Lloyd. William Bascom produced a general survey titled *The Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria*,⁹⁵ a book still cited today. It is a general ethnography examining various aspects of Yoruba life, kinship, and family life, economic, political and religious systems. Perhaps only Fadipe's *Sociology of the Yoruba*⁹⁶ and Eades' recent work *Yoruba Today*⁹⁷ would surpass it in breath and content. Bascom also published a monograph titled *Sociological Roles of the Yoruba Cult Groups*.⁹⁸ There he examined the role of the kinship system and the cult groups which were the focus of the peoples' religious life. Bascom's other contributions to the study of *Ifá* divination have been discussed earlier. Peter Lloyd, like Bascom, was interested in the Yoruba social system, especially the land law. But he wrote interesting articles on aspects of sociology of Yoruba religion. His article on sacred kingship⁹⁹ attempts to account for the historical origins of the institution of sacred kingship in the Benue Valley civilization. He also produced an interpretation of several varieties of Yoruba origin myths.¹⁰⁰ Another sociologist, Peter Morton-Williams¹⁰¹ did research into several cult groups, examining their organization, functions and rituals. Among such groups were Atinga, a witch-finding society, Egúñúñ Society, and *Ògbóni* cult. N. A. Fadipe's *Sociology of the Yoruba* cited above contains an important chapter on religion and morality including very advanced discussions, based on linguistic evidence, of Olorun Olodumare and the relationship between God and the *Oríṣà*. We should mention also the works of J. D. Y. Peel¹⁰² who has made the most significant contributions to Yoruba studies.

With independence and the departure of the colonialists' anthropologists, Nigerian scholars in the field of Social Sciences concentrated on secular aspects of society (politics, economy, family, etc.). Religious studies was not of any interest to them. However, in the past ten years or so younger scholars have taken very serious the social-scientific interpretations of different aspects of Yoruba religion and have therefore opened up a new frontier of research. They belong to different schools, and have adopted different theoretical frameworks such as social-functional approach,

structuralism, symbolic approach and semiotics which they often want to test with fieldwork materials, etc. Nevertheless, they are guided by one central concern: the structure, meaning and function of religion in society and culture. Some of these works are reductionistic, explaining some or all aspects of Yoruba beliefs and practices as social systems (a position that puts them in opposition to some history of religions scholars), nevertheless the results of this scholarship have enormously influenced the total picture of Yoruba religious tradition today. We would discuss only a few of these new sets of research: Karin Barber, Olatunde Lawuyi, Andrew Apter, and J. Lorand Matory. Karin Barber's research into *Oriki* (praise poetry) has been mentioned earlier on, but her works also belong to the social-functional perspective. Her article on "How Man Makes God in West Africa: Yoruba Attitudes towards *Órìṣà*"¹⁰³ is a reinterpretation of *Órìṣà* cult based on oral traditions. Rather than see the relationship of the *Órìṣà* and their clients within a purely spiritual context, she argued that the *Órìṣà* derive their power and existence from the structure of the Yoruba society. The relationship between the 'big men' and their supporters is analogous to the relationship between *Órìṣà* and their clients. Andrew Apter's¹⁰⁴ book also adopts a similar approach. Here the nature and structure of *Órìṣà* and their pantheon is portrayed as a reflection of conflict mediation in the Yoruba polity. He discussed the concept of *Órìṣà*, the principles that govern their relations to each other and to the society at large. Also, Apter in a separate paper¹⁰⁵ provides a detailed theoretical interpretation of the relationship between myth and ritual in Yoruba Society. The significance of this essay lies in the interdisciplinary focus in which he combined both functional and historical approaches to the myth-ritual complex. As he himself has argued "Yoruba ritual provides an illuminating framework for interpreting the political and historical implications of Yoruba myths and their variant traditions."¹⁰⁶ Olatunde Lawuyi has written three stimulating essays on sociological interpretations of the roles, symbolisms and functions of three Yoruba deities namely: *Èṣù*, *Ògún* and *Ṣangó*.¹⁰⁷ Using primarily secondary sources he has interpreted the nature of these *Órìṣà* in the light of new evidences and theoretical viewpoints. J. Lorand Matory also has several articles¹⁰⁸ on various aspects of the religion of the *Óyó* Yoruba

people. His forthcoming book¹⁰⁹ on gender and the politics of metaphor will be a major contribution to the study of myth, rituals and symbols in Yoruba religion. P. J. Dixon¹¹⁰ wrote a recent article on “Politics, Economics and the Continuity of Belief” in which, following Ardener and Peel and French structuralism, he relates Yoruba beliefs to the political economy of contemporary Nigeria. Also Benjamin Ray¹¹¹ in an article has examined certain Yoruba religious ideas that motivate economic behavior. George Simpson’s¹¹² study of Yoruba religion and medicine fits into this broad category of scholarship.

Yoruba Religion in the New World

This essay will not be complete without a discussion of the study of Yoruba religion in the Americas. Research into Yoruba religion has been carried out since the second quarter of the century. In art history, two studies deserve our attention: Robert Farris Thompson’s *Flash of the Spirit*¹¹³ and Mikelle Omari’s, *From the Inside to the Outside: The Art and Ritual of Bahian Candomblé*.¹¹⁴ Thompson’s book centers on Africa and Afro-American art and philosophy, and especially the visual images and philosophical thought of African groups in the Americas. He devotes section one to the Yoruba whom he described as “the creators of one of the premier cultures of the world.” Thompson examined the impact which the worship of the *orisha* (divinities) has had on the population of key cities in Brazil, Cuba and the U.S.A. With great analytical skill, Thompson produces detailed descriptions of the forms, aesthetics and evocative power generated by Yoruba sacred arts as they cross the Atlantic to take permanent abode in the new urban cities of Havana, Salvador, Miami, and New York. He confessed, however, that this is just the tip of the iceberg in the visual arts of the Yoruba in the New World.

Mikelle Omari’s work is an ethnographic documentary of Yoruba Candomblé arts and rituals among the African descendants of Bahia, Brazil. She presents the symbolic use and meaning of arts in the context of *orisha* ritual worship. Though primarily on arts, both studies contain significant religious motifs.

Materials on Yoruba religion proper in the New World con-

stitute the most noteworthy evidence about the tenacity of Yoruba culture in the Americas. The pioneering work of Nina Rodrigues¹¹⁵ on Candomblé should be mentioned first. He was the first to give us an account of Yoruba religion in Brazil and to identify it as the model on which many other “cults” of other African ethnic groups are patterned in this part of the new world. An important researcher in Brazil, Edison Carneiro,¹¹⁶ suggests that at the time of his writing in 1948 the Candomblé cult would be as old as two hundred years. Although the cult has all the characteristic features of Yoruba religion in Nigeria, however, there is a strong emphasis on ancestor spirits who are consulted on a daily basis. A conspicuous place is given to female *orishas* who were in most places associated with water. Two equally significant works in these areas are Simpson’s *Black Religion in the New World*,¹¹⁷ and Bastide’s, *Afro-Brazilian Religions*.¹¹⁸ The key figure in the development of Yoruba religious study in Brazil is Pierre Fatunbi Verger. He opened up his study around the 1930’s with the publication in French of the classic, *Notes sur le culte des Orisa et Vodoun*.¹¹⁹ The main thrust of the work lies in the numerous oral materials which he collected from different parts of Yorubaland and the New World. The scope of our indebtedness to Verger’s research and scholarship is also evidenced in the several works that have followed since his pioneering efforts. Among such works are *The Status of Yoruba Religion in Brazil*,¹²⁰ *Retratos de Bahia 1946-1952*,¹²¹ *Orisha: Les Dieux Yorouba en Afrique et au Nouveau Monde*.¹²²

Scholars have also been concerned about the status and survival of Yoruba religion in Brazil, especially at a time when Western influence constitutes a big threat to its survival. Verger’s essay¹²³ and Russel Hamilton’s¹²⁴ work could be placed in the same context as Wande Abimbola’s¹²⁵ ethnographic fieldwork on how Yoruba religion has fared in contemporary Brazil.

In the last few decades there have been several articles and sizeable chapters on the contemporary situation of the Yoruba religion. Among these valuable works are Rainer Flasche,¹²⁶ Juana Elbein dos Santos and Descoredes M. dos Santos,¹²⁷ Michael J. Turner,¹²⁸ and Jacob Gordon.¹²⁹ Also Juana Elbein dos Santos wrote on the meaning of death among Bahian Yoruba. She also did an interesting study on ancestors’ cults (*eegun*)¹³⁰ as did Julia

Braga, the current Director of the Center for African Studies who, in addition did an analysis of the divination system (*eerindinlogun*) in Brazil.¹³¹

In Trinidad, Yoruba religion is found in the form of “*Shango* cult” and although it encompasses the core tenets of Yoruba religion as the name suggests, a substantial part of the retention centers on *Shango* deity, the god of thunder and lightning in Yoruba religion. Among the pioneering studies, one would mention Herskovits,¹³² Mitchell,¹³³ Simpson¹³⁴ and Elder.¹³⁵ A significant observation is that several of these writers have also endeavored to examine these works in comparison with their corresponding practices among the Yoruba people of Nigeria. Simpson’s work is a good illustration. A conspicuous difference in the structure and content of the “two types” of religion is perhaps the lack of *Ifá* divination system in Trinidad. Simpson has suggested that for the *Shango* (*Xango*) cult in Brazil, the province of Recife is probably the most important center. We are further informed that here the Yoruba sub-ethnic groups constituted distinct religious cults at the beginning of the twentieth century such as *Ègbá*, Bonina (perhaps *Igbómìnà*), *Ìjeshà*, *Ìlòrin*, each having its own distinct pantheon of deities. Of importance is the work of Warner-Lewis¹³⁶, a Trinidadian who lived in Yorubaland for some time. Her book contains a whole chapter on Yoruba religion in Trinidad. An interesting essay by Stephen Glazier¹³⁷ on the interaction between the spiritual Baptist Church and the *Shango* cult exemplifies such studies. He observed four possible patterns of interaction between members of the two religious bodies but more significantly, he observed that the percentage of dual membership in both religious groups is quite high, a point also supported by a separate study carried out by Angelina Pollak-Eltz.¹³⁸

Today, a renewed interest in the subject is taking place. Several masters and doctoral theses have been devoted to significant themes in the area. One such central theme is the cult related theory of modernization and scientific studies. Two of such works, to the best of my knowledge unpublished, are written by Francis Mischel¹³⁹ and Dorothy C. Clement.¹⁴⁰

On the Cuban Island, one should mention the monumental work of Lydia Cabrera who dedicated her own life to the exposition,

analysis and understanding of Afro-Cuban culture, particularly the Santeria. Her work, undoubtedly, stands unsurpassed in terms of volume and depth. She is in Cuban Yoruba religion the equivalent of Pierre Verger in Brasil. Of relevance are the following books by her *Koeko Iyawo*,¹⁴¹ on how the *Iyawo Òrìṣà* are initiated, *Otan Iyebiye*¹⁴² (precious stones) and more importantly *Yemoya y Ochun*.¹⁴³ Also her *El Monte*¹⁴⁴ is about medical plants (*ewe orisha*). Anthropologist Rogelio Martinez Fure worked on Ijesa-Yoruba religious traditions in Cuba, Natalia Bolivar Arostegui¹⁴⁵ did a survey of *orisha* religion in Cuba, and Lopes Valdes wrote on Afro-Cuban Yoruba religion and tried to account for its revival, despite official indifference or even repression. Unfortunately most of these works are unavailable to scholars interested in this tradition.

Since the 1980's several important works have appeared on African religion in the New World. A substantial part of this, of course, focuses on Yoruba religion. Here I should mention Joseph Murphy's, *Santeria: An African Religion in America*.¹⁴⁶ It is a case study of the *orisha* tradition in the Bronx, New York, first carried out as a Ph.D. thesis at Temple University under Leonard Barrett. The work describes the origin, development and transformation of Santeria in Cuba and the U.S.A. Also, Judith Gleason's *Oya: In Praise of the Goddess*,¹⁴⁷ interprets the mythology and symbolism of the black goddess *Oya*, a personification of the River Niger. Her transformations in her new environment in New York City, Brazil and the Caribbean are also discussed. Sandra T. Barnes (ed), *Africa's Ogun: Old World and New*,¹⁴⁸ is a collection of nine essays on different aspects of the deity in Africa and the New World. Among other publications of religious significance are Migene Gonzalez-Wippler,¹⁴⁹ Gary Edwards and John Mason.¹⁵⁰ John Gray's¹⁵¹ recent bibliographic work provides an up-to-date inventory of available published materials on Yoruba religion and culture in West Africa and the New World.

I have presented here some of the trends discernable in New World Yoruba culture and its attendant academic study. The most urgent need at this time is that major works, such as those of Verger and Carneiro, be translated into English so that English speaking scholars may have better access to them. In fact, it may be said that English is the minority language in the New World Yoruba

religious studies, and a knowledge of Romance languages is necessary for any prospective research. A few strategic translations would facilitate American scholars' access to this corpus.

Yoruba Religion and History of Religions

With those references to the contributions of art history, oral literature and anthropology to the study of Yoruba religion, and a review of the research into Yoruba religion in the New World, I would return to the main discipline of history of religions and examine what works on Yoruba religion have been done in this area. A major contribution to the phenomenology of Yoruba religion was made by Peter R. McKenzie, who, along with Geoffrey Parrinder, was part of the University of Ibadan group in its early years. McKenzie wrote several essays on the cosmology and structure of *Orìṣà* tradition.¹⁵² One important aspect of his research is his use of archival and secondary sources in writing history of Yoruba religious tradition.¹⁵³ We see very little of this kind of work in Yoruba religious studies in general. Recent studies of Yoruba religion in the past ten years have focused on what we often called *Religionswissenschaft*. By this we mean the historical and phenomenological study of religious phenomena in their cultural context. In the past fifteen years, religious studies and philosophy programs in Nigerian Universities, especially at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ilé-Ifé, have encouraged the application of this approach to the description and analysis of data. This revolution and departure from the Ibadan tradition began with the increase in scholars trained in Europe, America and subsequently at Ilé-Ifé. Most of them have been influenced by new approaches to the study of religion in these places. Here should be mentioned the work of Isiaaka Laléyé¹⁵⁴ a scholar from Benin Republic trained in France. His book *La Conception de la Personne dans la Pensée Traditionnelle Yoruba* is a phenomenological study of human life in relation to Yoruba religious worldview. While several scholars before him have taken the position that the Yoruba cosmos is two-tiered, *aïjé* earth and *òrun* the sky/heaven, Laléyé adds a third tier: *ilé* (the mother earth) which he describes as the source of vital power.

From a similar philosophical-hermeneutics tradition have arisen

the contributions of Akin Makinde on Yoruba philosophy and medicine,¹⁵⁵ Șegun Gbadegesin on destiny and ultimate meaning,¹⁵⁶ and Barry Hallen on phenomenology and African thought.¹⁵⁷ Hallen and Șodipo published a book on witchcraft and medicine.¹⁵⁸ My work on religion and kingship among Ondo Yoruba people¹⁵⁹ adopts an interdisciplinary approach combining models in the history of religions and social science. In addition to this, we should mention the valuable contributions of John Pemberton's studies on the Ìgbóminà-Yoruba.¹⁶⁰ In the African studies context, Pemberton is well known in art history circles, however, in religious studies his essays on Ilá Òraṅguń festivals and kingship rituals have contributed greatly to the history of religions. Indeed his works have become models for younger scholars now exploring new areas of research in Yoruba religion. The work of the Scandinavian scholar Roland Hallgren on "The Good Things in Life: A Study of the Traditional Religious Culture of the Yoruba People"¹⁶¹ is also an important contribution to Yoruba studies.

Today scholars of Yoruba religion have realized the significance of interdisciplinary studies as an attempt to bypass the problems that often arise from a one-dimensional perspective. A religious anthropological study of aspects of Yoruba religion has been attempted by Lawuyi and Olupona.¹⁶² Our two joint essays on "Metaphoric Associations and the Conception of Death," and "Making Sense of the Ajé Festival" are new beginnings in this endeavor. It is also hoped that when Benjamin Ray completes his work on *Ifá* divination ritual in Ilé-Ifé, our knowledge of this important deity and divination system will be enhanced.

Finally, a few neglected areas of Yoruba religious studies. There is a general lack of interest in theoretical issues as they relate to the description and analysis of Yoruba religion. I agree that theoretical works that contain more arguments than ethnographic details may do no good to our scholarship, yet a knowledge of relevant theories of knowledge is essential. Students of Yoruba religion are generally not interested in historical problems and analysis. Yet in recent times we have seen the disappearance of several Yoruba cults which shows that they are subject to historical changes. For example, the cult of *Soyépóná* (god of smallpox) has almost disappeared from most Yoruba cities due to the World Health Organization's program on

the eradication of small pox. It seems to me that students of Yoruba religion must take active interest in examining secondary sources: archival materials, missionary and travellers reports, intelligence reports, from which historians have written so much about Christianity and Islam in Yorubaland. Thirdly, the relationship between religion and women is still an unexplored area of research. Gleason's book on *Oya* (cited earlier), and Deidre Badejo's¹⁶³ forthcoming book on *Òṣun* are indications that, through necessary painstaking research, the nature and functions of female *Órisà* in the Yoruba pantheon and society can be fruitfully researched. Fourthly, it is important to relate our research in Nigeria to the study of Yoruba religion in the New World. Any student of Yoruba religion who visits Brazil, Cuba and the major cities of the U.S.A. would realize the influence of *orisha* tradition in the Americas. We urgently need works of a comparative nature, so that what has been retained from the West African coast and from new influences can be documented.

Another neglected area is comparative work involving Yoruba and crypto-yoruba religions i.e. the indigenous religions of peoples who are known to have borrowed heavily from the Yoruba, e.g. the Fon, the Ewe or Bini (Edo). Here I should mention a recent study of Bini and Yoruba traditions by Emmanuel Babatunde.¹⁶⁴ This comparison is the more necessary as these traditions blended with "purely" Yoruba religion in Brazil and Cuba. We can not really do justice to Yoruba religion across the Atlantic if we neglect its avatars and reinterpretation within the West African religions.¹⁶⁵

Lastly, there is a need for more in-depth studies of religion in Yoruba sub-ethnic groups rather than the general overview of Yoruba religion that is predominant in research. There are regional, cultural and geographical variations among Yoruba city states. It means that the scholar must be prepared to deal not only with Yoruba language, but with the local dialects. I noticed during my fieldwork among Ondo-Yoruba people, that whenever I insisted on my informants speaking Ondo dialects in interview, I obtained more detailed and accurate information than when proper Yoruba was the language of discourse. This leads me to another significant point. I believe no breakthrough can be expected in the field unless and until we pay close attention to Yoruba

hermeneutics and epistemologies, which means that we must be ready to inhabit the territory of Yoruba language and ask questions from therein and not as several scholars have done, position ourselves in the English medium and philosophy and ask questions about Yoruba culture and religion from that position of eminence. There needs to be a forum where theory oriented scholars, be they trained in anthropology, history of religions, semiotics, literary, or cultural studies, meet to start developing new theories or uncovering existing ones in indigenous Yoruba discourses.¹⁶⁶

It is hoped that this decade and the next century will witness new research findings in Yoruba religious culture.

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SHRINES, MEDICINES, AND THE STRENGTH OF THE HEAD: THE WAY OF THE WARRIOR AMONG THE DIOLA OF SENEGAMBIA

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Summary

The history of warfare has long been associated with a variety of religious practices designed to lessen the likelihood of death and enhance the possibility of victory. Warriors enter a world where the expectation of a normal life span is challenged by the death of comrades and where martial skill cannot ensure survival. This paper examines the way in which the Diola of Senegambia used religious practices and ideas to lessen the uncertainty of war during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Diola warriors sought the assistance of spirit shrines to lessen the uncertainties and dangers of war. There are strong parallels between the types of ritual employed by Diola warriors and Diola wrestlers, who share a common mission of eliminating risks. These parallels are discussed briefly before a detailed examination of Diola rituals related to war, the types of ritual prophylaxis utilized by warriors, and the types of Diola (as well as Christian and Muslim) medicines used for spiritual protection. Several specific war shrines are described as well as the means by which they were created. Finally, the article discusses the "strength of the head", special powers that enable warriors to protect themselves from harm, evade capture, and even transform themselves into certain types of animals. The article concludes with an analysis of the impact of colonial wars, with their greater firepower and more far-reaching consequences, on the connections between religion and the Diola way of the warrior. A central part of the spiritual crisis accompanying the colonial conquest, not only for the Diola but for many other African peoples, was the defeat of the religious structures that provided spiritual support for the way of the warrior.

The history of warfare has long been associated with a variety of religious practices and rituals designed to lessen the likelihood of death and enhance the possibility of victory. In sharp contrast to mundane existence where the powers of death manifest themselves relatively infrequently and are seen as extraordinary events requiring specific explanations, men of war enter a world where the expectation of a normal life span is continually challenged by the deaths of comrades and where martial skill is not sufficient to ensure survival. This was especially true for warriors before the age of mechanized warfare, where there was a greater reliance on the particular powers of individual participants. Despite elaborate

preparations by war leaders, battles seem to have a will of their own. What westerners often call chance seems to decide the outcome of many battles. Chance also decides who will live and who will die. In Erich Maria Remarque's World War I novel, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, the narrator, Paul Bäumer, described the power of chance over the battlefield:

It is this Chance that makes us indifferent. A few months ago I was sitting in a dug-out playing skat; after a while I stood up and went to visit some friends in another dug-out. On my return nothing more was to be seen of the first one, it had been blown to pieces by a direct hit. I went back to the second and arrived just in time to lend a hand digging it out ... It is just as much a matter of chance that I am still alive as that I might have been hit ... No soldier outlives a thousand chances. But every soldier believes in Chance and trusts his luck.¹

Despite the apparently pervasive role of chance in battle, combatants seek to minimize its role in a multitude of ways. It is extremely difficult for soldiers or warriors, however fervently they believe in their cause or their calling, to engage in battle if they have little power to enhance their ability to survive.

Religion's intimate connection with the experience of both soldier and warrior stems from combatants' desires to minimize the arbitrariness of chance, to cheat the fates, and to control their own destinies through the invocation of spiritual powers. They seek to marginalize the forces of chaos and disorder which are so central to the experience of war by ritually invoking protective powers that accompany them into battle. This ambition is shared by non-combatants in their home communities, who often conduct important rituals linked to the struggle against the arbitrariness of death. In this paper, however, I shall focus on the way in which the warrior brings religion into the battle against the uncertainty of war. This will be done by examining the religious experience of Diola warriors in pre-colonial Senegambia. Furthermore, I will suggest that the failure of such rituals to protect warriors in warfare against the French was an important cause of the spiritual crisis that accompanied the colonial conquest.

The Diola are the major ethnic group of the lower Casamance region of Senegambia. Numbering some 500,000 people, they inhabit the well-watered coastal plain between the Gambia and the Sao Domingo Rivers. They are sedentary wet-rice farmers,

relatively self-sufficient in food production, and are usually described as "stateless" people, governed by village councils. During the eighteenth and nineteenth century warfare was extremely common. Wars were fought between Diola groups and an indigenous Bainounk population, with Mandinka who were also expanding into the region, and with Luso-African slave raiders who attacked Diola settlements. Warfare also occurred between various Diola groups and even between neighboring communities within a particular Diola sub-group.² Wars were fought because of disputes over land, livestock and women. While relatively few people died in battle, the victors often seized slaves and cattle from their defeated enemy. Population growth and the increasing importance of the Atlantic slave trade led to a dramatic increase in the frequency of war by the eighteenth century. Because the lower Casamance was heavily wooded and infested with tsetse fly, cavalry could not be used in combat. Warriors relied on bows, arrows, spears, and machetes for their primary weapons. Muskets were of limited value because of their inaccuracy and the slowness to reload. Fighting at close quarters was the norm.

In this paper I will examine the religious experience of warriors within a single Diola sub-group, that of Esulalu. The Esulalu, numbering approximately 15,000 people, inhabit five townships on the south shore of the Casamance River. The Esulalu speak a common dialect of Diola, though there is some inter-township variation. They share certain spirit shrines (*ukine*) and have a definite sense of being Esulalu as opposed to other groups of Diola. They share the concept of a supreme being called Emitai ("of the sky"), who created the earth, its peoples, and various types of religious paths for different peoples to seek spiritual assistance in resolving the problems of human existence. For the Diola-Esulalu, Emitai created and continues to create various types of spirit shrines that serve as intermediaries between the Diola and their supreme being. These shrines are intimately involved in the Diola's quest for physical and economic security as well as serving as the primary supports of a Diola social and moral order. Specific shrines protect individuals involved in such diverse economic activities as blacksmithing, fishing, and raiding and also regulate people's conduct when involved in such activities.³

Wrestlers of Warfare

The Esulalu warrior, like other Diola, sought the spiritual assistance of the *ukine* to lessen the uncertainty and danger of war. He was keenly aware of the lack of major differences in military technology between opposing sides. Since much of the fighting involved raiding, the ability to move quietly through the forests was crucial. Since combat was at close range, the physical strength of individual warriors was important, though it was not a guarantee of victory. The actual struggle between warriors resembled that of a wrestling match where a brief mental lapse, a slip on rain-dampened leaves, or sudden fatigue could spell the difference between victory and defeat. It is interesting to see that the ritual surrounding Diola wrestling and Diola warfare are similar in structure. Indeed, wrestling could be considered a means of socialization of Diola youth into the ways of the warrior. Their most significant differences rest on the magnitude of the risks involved and the strength of the spiritual powers that are invoked. Wrestlers battle for honor and fame, but warriors battle for life itself.

It is worth examining the parallels more closely. What follows is a description of wrestling rituals in which I participated in the 1970's, though testimony about them suggests a high degree of continuity in their performance throughout this century. On the eve of a wrestling match Diola youth sneak out of their homes and, in small groups under cover of darkness, steal chickens from their neighbors. To be able to steal chickens requires quickness and the ability to move about silently within a settled community. These are skills that are necessary for cattle raids and for war. Late at night, after raiding for chickens, the young men gather at a mock spirit shrine⁴ (*boekine*) reserved for young male wrestlers. The oldest youths preside over the ritual sacrifice of the chickens and offer prayers for the township quarter's success in the wrestling match. Then the chickens are roasted on an open fire and eaten by the young wrestlers. For Diola, like many people for whom it is a luxury, meat is seen as providing additional strength to those who eat it. Wrestlers maximize their strength by eating meat on the eve of a match. They also refrain from sexual intercourse since that, it is thought, would diminish their physical strength. Married people

are forbidden to engage in wrestling because of the debilitating effects of regular sexual intercourse.⁵

On the day of the match, male wrestlers dress in a short cloth, with arm and ankle bracelets made of fan palm fibers, and with various types of medicines: traditional Diola ones, usually roots; Muslim gris-gris, leather pouches or goats' horns filled with prayers from the Koran; and/or Christian medicines, crucifixes or saints' medals. All of these medicines are designed to protect the wrestler against misfortune in the match and against the medicines of his opponents. Many of the wrestlers also carry knives or machetes to the match. As it will become clear shortly, wrestlers dress like warriors. Different quarters of each township have their own team. In a formal match, as in war, individuals cannot wrestle opponents from the same quarter or people who are regarded as their kin. Any serious injury from such a match would be too disruptive of kinship or quarter ties.

The actual wrestling matches begin with dances in which individuals challenge their opponents through threatening or mocking movements. The challenge could involve a wrestler using a machete to strike a tree that shaded his opponents. Diola wrestling is similar to Greco-Roman wrestling, in that one may not turn one's back on one's opponent, nor touch the ground with one's back. One false move and one could lose the match. Such errors are not seen as occurring by accident, but result from the efficacy of the wrestler's preparatory rituals, his medicines, or those of his opponents. A particular wrestler could dominate virtually the entire match only to find that a momentary error led to disaster. Those who are victorious in wrestling earn nicknames that remain with them for their entire lives. Even elders are remembered for their wrestling prowess. Until the 1950's the dances that followed the matches were the primary opportunities for youths to court girls. Wrestling matches simulate the physical test of war; bring fame, glory, or disgrace; and provide ways of coming to the attention of the opposite sex.

These wrestling rituals fall into a structure that seeks to consecrate the group, the quarter's wrestlers; maximize the strength of individual wrestlers; protect them from injury and from any form of spiritual assault while wrestling; and reintegrate them into the

community after the matches. The preparatory rituals join the individual to his teammates in a common quest for victory. Sexual abstinence, the eating of meat, and the preparation of medicines all seek to maximize both the powers of the warrior and eliminate any vulnerabilities that could be exploited by his opponents. The closing celebration reaffirms the community's belief that a wrestler should eventually enter the adult community as a warrior and a husband.

Despite the difference in the degree of danger between being thrown in a wrestling match and being killed in war, the absense of control by the participants that characterizes these situations is similar. Success in both depends on avoiding misfortune through ritual action. In examining the way of the Diola warrior in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it will become clear that warrior and wrestler share a common set of religious concerns and address them in a similar fashion. Added to the warrior's arsenal of spiritual protections are the powers of real *ukine* and of certain types of spiritual powers that can aid them in combat.

The consecration of the efforts of the Diola war party focuses on the consultation of certain types of oracular spirit shrines that are closely associated with either the township or the township quarter. Before deciding to engage in war and on the eve of an actual battle, assuming that they were not the victims of a surprise attack, the warriors gathered at a spirit shrine associated with the warrior party.⁶ At these shrines decisions were made to engage in war, plans were developed, and the aid of the spirit shrine was requested. Participation at these shrines was limited to the inhabitants of the area protected by the shrine, at times an entire quarter, a series of quarters, or only a single neighborhood within a quarter. The restrictions on participation at these shrines indicated the type of alliances and the boundaries of a moral community that existed at the time of the creation of the shrine. Thus, for the Esulalu township of Kadjinol's shrine of Elenkine-Sergerh, men from four quarters of Kadjinol could attend, except for the Ecuhuh portion of Kafone, which had been a part of the Hassouka quarter at the time of Elenkine-Sergerh's creation. For the township of Samatit, all initiated men could attend a township-wide shrine known as Enac.⁷ The particular shrine chosen by the war-

riors corresponded to the number of quarters which from warriors were to be drawn.

Many of the quarters shrines traced their origins back to powerful individuals who claimed that they could see into the spiritual world. They claimed to see *ammahl*, spirits who wandered the world and were associated with water.⁸ In the course of communicating with the *ammahl* they received instructions about how to tap their spiritual powers to address matters of community concern. This included the waging of a "just" war. When the *ammahl* saw a war as legitimate they would aid the warriors, but they withheld their powers when the warriors of the quarter were deemed to be in the wrong. Consultations of the *ammahl* before going into combat helped to legitimate warfare and diminish the warrior's concern for his physical safety. Where warfare involved the physical safety of a quarter or township and its lands, the legitimization of warfare was probably less important than the reassurance that powerful spiritual forces were assisting them against their enemies.⁹

When consulting these quarter shrines, according to one shrine elder, the *ammahl* would "summon those with head (special powers). They will say what is there... When they had finished listening, people would ask them what they thought. If they thought we are in the wrong then there will be no war." The shrine elders who had this power of "head" did not become possessed. Rather the *ammahl* communicated their views through dreams or by allowing themselves to be seen or heard by elders with powers to communicate with them. The advice given by the elder was said to be the advice of the spirit, even though it was in the words of the shrine elder. The *ammahl* could consent to the war and provide them with power or it could withhold its consent and its resources. When the men of one quarter of Kadjinol decided to ignore the advice of Elenkine-Sergerh and go to battle despite the warning, the *ammahl* was said to have deserted the shrine and gone to another township. They lost the battle.¹⁰

While quarter shrines provided a place for the discussion of battle plans and attempts to gain the assistance of spiritual powers, the turmoil of war itself helped to produce new religious leaders and new spirit shrines which reinforced this emphasis on the consecration of the warrior with a "just" mission. The most important of

these leaders was Kooliny Djabune, a man who claimed to have had visions of Emitai during an inter-quarter war within the township of Kadjinol. This war, which occurred in the late eighteenth century, began at a time when Hassouka was the most populous and most powerful section of Kadjinol. Hassouka's men began to attack and rape women of Kafone as they went to a spring in the rice paddies to the south of Kafone.¹¹ In the midst of this crisis, Kooliny Djabune fell into a sleep that resembled death. According to one elder Kooliny's "strength went (to Emitai). Someone who saw you would say you have died."¹² According to Antoine Houmandrissah Diedhiou, "Emitai wept... It is forbidden to marry (here a euphemism for sexual intercourse) in a meeting place."¹³ When Kooliny returned to Emitai a second time he was given a pipe and was told to look for a spear in his backyard. If he found it Kafone could go to war against Hassouka. Kooliny summoned the warriors of Kafone to his new shrine, Cabai (the spear) and prepared for war. When Hassouka arrived at the field of battle, Kooliny lit his pipe and a cloud of smoke was said to cover the area. Hassouka could not see its enemies and Kafone won a decisive victory.

Cabai became the major war shrine for the Esulalu townships. Sacrifices were offered before going into battle. The spirit associated with Cabai was said to enable its adepts to hide in the forest, but it only aided warriors engaged in a "just" war. Like the quarter shrines, Cabai became a place where military planning took place and where warriors would come together before going to battle. Kafone rewarded its allies with smaller shrines of Cabai, which strengthened them, but also made the alliance permanent. The spirit associated with a single type of Cabai could not fight on both sides of a battle.¹⁴

Quarter and township shrines as well as Cabai provided Diola warriors with a sense of a collective relationship with the spiritual powers that protected their community. Their religious leaders, aided by their power of the "head" (*houkaw*), provided them with a sense that forces in the spiritual world were honoring their requests for assistance and were sanctifying their efforts. This assistance often came in the form of reinforcing the fundamental skills of warriors: strength, stealth, and courage. Furthermore,

these shrine rituals provided a setting where men sharing a common mission and common anxieties could commune with each other in the seclusion of a sacred precinct. The group confidence that this fostered cannot be over-estimated. Like the wrestler at his mock shrine, the rituals concluded with the eating of the meat of sacrificed animals, thereby strengthening the warrior on the eve of battle. After participating in these rituals, warriors left with some degree of security that they had collectively reduced the threat of chaos and death that was an inherent part of war.

Armed with the protection of powerful spirits and the strength of sacrificial meat, Diola warriors tried to conserve their strength by avoiding sexual relations. For warrior and wrestler alike the loss of semen is seen as physically debilitating. According to Diola beliefs about conception, semen is male blood that mixes with female blood in the womb. Blood is the abode of the soul and is likened to the palm wine of the palm tree and the water that fertilizes the earth. To lose semen is to lose a life enhancing power; to lose it just before battle is to make oneself vulnerable to attack.¹⁵

Ritual Protection and the Strength of the Head

Warriors also sought personal forms of protection through ritual action. Individuals requested rituals to protect them from injury from metal objects at a *boekine* called Katapf. The primary function of this shrine was the protection of individuals, both in war and in peace, from being injured by knives, axes, or weapons.¹⁶ As muskets became more common, Diola leaders created a shrine called Houpoombene which aided people in hunting and protected them against bullets or the accidental explosion of a musket. This was also utilized by warriors.

Warriors also sought to acquire medicines to safeguard themselves from personal injury in battle. Some of these medicines were consecrated by spirit shrines, but for the individual, not the group. Thus, members of blacksmith lineages would wear string necklaces or fan palm fibers consecrated at the blacksmith shrine of Gilaite. Others carried similar objects consecrated by lineage shrines, or shrines of the hearth, or other shrines with whom the warrior had a connection. Sometimes earth from a shrine altar was placed in a

goat or antelope's horn and then sealed, thereby invoking the power of a particular *boekine* wherever it was carried. All of these medicines were designed to bring the protective power of a particular spirit into action during the course of battle. These medicines were prepared by shrine elders.¹⁷ Other medicines were examples of sympathetic magic and were not connected to the *ukine*: mirrors that repel bullets and arrows, roots of trees that were noted for their strength or endurance, and other objects. These medicines appear to be simpler than Native American medicine bundles which often combine the spiritual attributes of various types of animals and plants in a single bundle. Diola medicines seem to be kept separate. They are also more standardized than Native American medicines; only the mix of separate medicines worn simultaneously indicate the individualization of spiritual prophylaxis.¹⁸

As contact with Muslims and Christians increased, beginning in the sixteenth century, Diola warriors sought medicines from these religious traditions. Mandinka traders who travelled through the region purchasing rice and slaves may also have sold Islamic talismen known as gris-gris. By the mid-nineteenth century, when permanent Muslim settlements were established on the fringes of Esulalu, a vigorous trade in gris-gris had developed. These consisted of prayers from the *Koran* placed in goats' horns or in leather pouches and either worn or carried by their users.¹⁹ These could be used to protect people against bullets, arrows, spears, and knives. Muslim gris-gris enjoyed particular prestige because of their association with the dominant religion of the sudanic region of West Africa, to the north of the Diola areas, and because of the military prowess of the Mandinka and Wolof, who brought both Islam and gris-gris into the region.

With the arrival of Portuguese traders in the sixteenth century, a vigorous trade in Christian medicines also developed. Crucifixes and saints' medals were seen as having the same type of properties as gris-gris and Diola medicines. Such medicines were particularly valued against cannon and muskets which were introduced by European Christians. In 1853 Hyacinthe Hecquard described the Luso-African veneration of these objects and how they were readily accepted as part of the prophylactic arsenal of Diola warriors. The Luso-Africans of Ziguinchor were described as having:

a great veneration for images, the medals and the Christs, to which they associate a wide power to protect them from all accidents. This belief is widespread among the Floups (Diola) and the Bainounk, the Portuguese traders having made of these images, medals and crucifixes, an object of commerce, and trade them for slaves that they keep or exchange for livestock. Little time has passed since this type of traffic has stopped, not only because it was immoral, but because the products were no longer sought after by the natives, since a Floup who had dearly purchased a copper Christ which he had carried among his gris-gris, was nevertheless killed by a gunshot.²⁰

Despite this tragedy Christian medicines remained important during the nineteenth century.

By the mid-nineteenth century, Diola warriors could draw on traditional Diola medicines as well as Muslim and Christian charms and often combined them. Like the wrestler, the warrior sought spiritual assistance from a variety of sources in an effort to minimize misfortune and deprive his foe of spiritual protection. Furthermore, the sight of an opponent covered with powerful medicines could intimidate a warrior who was unsure of his own prophylactic devices. However, medicines that did not appear to be efficacious were abandoned.

The last example of spiritual powers displayed by a warrior was not shared by the wrestler nor could it be acquired through the performance of religious rituals. This was the “power of the head”, something that enabled one to have visions and dreams which allowed one to see into the world of the spirit. This power was more closely associated with Diola prophets and priests but it was also important to the Diola warrior tradition.²¹ Diola attribute this power to two sources: the supreme being, Emitai, and the *ammahl*. Emitai’s gift of the power of the head was more associated with the prophecy, but when associated with warriors it enabled them to invoke spirits associated with the *ukine*, to see into the spirit world, and, at times, to predict the future.

Such powers from Emitai were regarded as far rarer than those that came from the *ammahl*. Warriors with such powers were said to be able to transform themselves into birds and vanish when nearly overpowered. Others were said to assume the strength of panthers, elephants, or lions when cornered by the enemy. Several elders described ancestors of theirs who could transform themselves into domestic animals who could then approach an enemy’s home and overhear family discussions of impending battles. Others could

change themselves into vultures, frequent visitors to rituals where animals were sacrificed. These rituals could include the quarter shrines and war shrines where their opponents discussed their war plans. The Esulalu believed that the *ammahl* provided warriors with additional powers of stealth and strength which allowed them to elude their opponents, overwhelm them, or spy on their activities. In many ways, powers of the head that came from *ammahl* resembled the gifts of spiritual allies that strengthened the skills of Plains Indian warriors in North America. To the Diola, however, the power of the head associated with warriors was seen as similar to the powers of witches (*kusaye*), but was only used for the benefit of the entire community.²²

Some *ammahl*, particularly those associated with the spirit shrines, gave certain individuals the power of the head because they were seen as sufficiently responsible to use it on behalf of the community. Other types of *ammahl*, who roamed the rice paddies, the marshlands, and forests, and were not associated with any shrines sold their powers, for the lives of the recipient's children, other kin, or their future good health. In exchange for becoming a great warrior a man might surrender his hopes for a large family that could support him in old age or of enjoying good health until a ripe old age.²³ These *ammahl* demanded a Faustian bargain in exchange for fame, a limitation on misfortune in the present crisis, and success for the community during the lifetime of the *ammahl*'s recruit.

Finally, with the battle over, the warrior needed to be reintegrated into the community. Unlike the warrior in more centralized and economically differentiated societies, the Diola warrior had to return to a life of farming and artisanal work. There were no full time warriors in Esulalu. In sharp contrast to the wrestler who acquires no pollution through his actions and is reintegrated into the community through social dances that last well into the night, the warrior brought with him a form of pollution that threatened the life enhancing power of women. It was a pollution that came from a close association with death and it had to be removed before the warrior could sleep in his own home. This ritual was known as *Hoonig*.²⁴

The various means of invoking spiritual powers to protect warriors in battle are part of a broader pattern of religious activity that

seeks to minimize dangers in a wide variety of activities, for controlling the fire of the forge by blacksmiths, to climbing and tapping palm trees, or delivering a baby. Each of these activities is associated with a particular *boekine* or several *ukine* who are asked to protect the participants. Underlying the consecration rituals, the special abstinences, the preparation and wearing of medicines, and the use of spiritual powers that I have just described is the perception that war, like wrestling, is a highly risky business, capable of sudden reversals or disasters. The consultation of powerful spirits, ritual prophylaxis and the use of special powers are attempts by Diola warriors to both predict and control the outcome of battle and to protect themselves against similar actions by their opponents. Underlying the purification ritual of *Hoonig* is the need to bring the warrior back into the ordinary way of the Diola, as a rice farmer and as a member of a family concerned with the enhancement of its fertility.

The Diola Way of the Warrior

While the way of the warrior is often viewed by western scholars as a primarily secular concern, this is not the case in many societies in Africa, the Americas, or in Asia. If, as Robin Horton suggests, African traditional religions are centrally concerned with problems of "explanation, prediction, and control", then it is not surprising to find a close connection between religious life and the warrior.²⁵ First, the isolation of "secular" activities from "religious" ones, makes little sense in a community where spirit shrines are central to most activities of community life. Secondly, warfare, through its menace to the lives of all who come in contact with it and through its suspension of normal systems of ethics, threatens the entire system of explanation that people utilize to explain their world. To a far greater extent than most activities, war raises the specter of chaos, something that Suzanne Langer points out is the one thing to which people can not adapt.²⁶

The way of the Diola warrior is designed to minimize this threat of chaos. Diola warriors use religious ritual to explain the particular situation in which they find themselves and to convince themselves of the justice of their cause. By doing so, they enlist the power of

the *ukine* to help them. The warrior utilizes specially prepared medicines to invoke the presence of spiritual powers as he enters battle, and he seeks supernatural gifts to give him an advantage over his opponents. Both in his preparations for war and in battle, the Diola warrior seeks to minimize uncertainty by invoking spiritually powerful assistance. He seeks to move what is, compared to modern warfare, an extraordinarily personal form of combat, with the individual bearing primary responsibility for his success and failure, to the level of spiritual powers. Warfare between individuals and groups becomes a battle between their spirit shrines, their *ammahl*, and their medicines. Furthermore, the multiplicity of ritual actions insulates the warrior against the problems of failure. Defeat in battle could be explained by the improper invocation of any one of a number of powers, the impurity of the individual or his colleagues, or the superior power of his opponents' medicines. Finally, the purification rites assure the Diola warrior-farmer that he can be reintegrated into his community when the fighting is over.

It appears that the way of the Diola warrior, through its reliance on shrines, medicines, and the power of the head, provided an effective means of minimizing uncertainty for Diola communities in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. During this time, warfare occurred between people using similar technologies, similar strategies, and similar concepts of the rules of war. With the move from regional warfare to colonial warfare, however, the rules of war changed. Suddenly, one's opponents had vastly superior firepower. French colonial forces used gunships to destroy Diola villages from several kilometers distance. Breech-loading rifles gave the French a decisive advantage over Diola muskets, bows and arrows, and spears. While Diola resistance was persistent, the last armed revolt against the French occurring in 1943, it produced very few victories. Furthermore, the French occupied the area, imposing new taxes, laws, and leaders. This was in sharp contrast to their prior experience of victorious raiders carrying off a few slaves and cattle.

Because of the intimate connection between the Diola way of the warrior and Diola religion, the colonial conquest created a religious crisis in Diola communities. Some people saw the failure of the Diola way of the warrior as stemming from both the failure of the spirit shrine system and the superior spiritual powers of the French. In such cases, they sought to understand the religious basis of

French power and questioned the efficacy of their own. Others sought to understand their defeat in terms of their own actions, examining their ritual practices and looking for examples of moral lapses that could explain their failure to gain the assistance of the spirit shrines. One of their most frequent explanations was the existence of witchcraft. In the wake of the French conquest, the Diola and their Balante and Bainounk neighbors, began to engage in witch eradication movements.²⁷ Thousands of people died in poison ordeals as people sought to explain their defeat through the moral corruption of witchcraft. In the 1940's a Diola prophetess named Alinesitoué led a revitalization movement that led to a reaffirmation of Diola religion that has carried into the post-colonial era, but it did so without sustaining a role for the warrior.²⁸

Throughout Africa, witch-finding movements, new prophetic movements which sought to revitalize traditional religions, and new multi-ethnic African religious movements developed in the aftermath of the colonial conquest and the defeat of African ways of the warrior. In many communities these movements were successful in explaining the new colonial and sustaining vital African traditional religions. This was true of the Diola-Esulalu, but not of all Diola groups. In other areas, Christianity and Islam displaced traditional religions as part of the crisis of confidence in traditional institutions that followed the military conquest. In societies where religion was integrally involved in the psychological and spiritual support of the warrior way, a crushing military defeat posed a major challenge to the religious system. Military defeats and colonial occupation had to be explained, not as momentary setbacks that would be imminently repaired, but as spiritually potent signifiers that demanded major new directions in the religious life of the conquered community. Crushing defeats of warriors and the ritual systems that supported them became, not only in Africa but in many parts of the world, a major catalyst for new religious movements within existing traditions, conversion from one tradition to another, and the midwife at the birth of new religions.

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¹ Erich Maria Remarque, translated by A.W. Wheen, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, New York: Fawcett Crest, 1989 (1928), p. 101.

² It should be pointed out, however, that the term "Diola" is a relatively recent one, given the peoples of the lower Casamance by Wolof sailors who accompanied French traders and administrators into the region. A concept of Diola ethnic identity is primarily a creation of the colonial period in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. See: Robert M. Baum, "Incomplete Assimilation: Koonjaen and Diola in Pre-Colonial Senegambia", Paper presented to the 98th Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association, San Francisco, 1983, p. 2. Louis Vincent Thomas has written the major ethnographic study of the Diola, but does not address the issue of Diola ritual preparations for war. Historical works by Peter Mark and Christian Roche, while rich sources for the region's precolonial history, do not address the issue of the linkage between religion and warfare. L.V. Thomas, *Les Diola*, Dakar: IFAN, 1958/1959. Peter Mark, *A Cultural, Economic, and Religious History of the Basse Casamance since 1500*, Stuttgart: Frank Steiner Verlag, 1985. Christian Roche, *Conquête et Résistance des Peuples de Casamance*, Dakar: Nouvelle Editions Africaines, 1976.

³ This paper is based on field research conducted in Senegambia (1974-1975, 1976, 1977-1979, and 1987) with the generous support of the Thomas Watson Foundation, the Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship Program, the Social Science Research Council, and The Ohio State University. An American Council of Learned Society Research Fellowship for Recent Recipients of the Ph. D. provided me with time to write this article. I am grateful to professors Jack Balcer, Joe Guilmartin, Bruce Lincoln, and Marilyn Waldman for their comments on earlier drafts of this paper. For a broader examination of Diola religious history and the use of oral traditions in the study of precolonial history see: Robert M. Baum, *Shrines of the Slave Trade: Diola Religion and Society in PreColonial Senegambia*, Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, forthcoming.

⁴ I use the term "mock spirit shrine" to describe ritual sites that are created for children to socialize them into the religious life of the communities. Both boys and girls have such shrines, complete with elders, and ritual activities, but no spirits are associated with the rituals. Children can practice ritual activity without entering into the dangerous activity of supplicating a spirit associated with a particular shrine in a "true" spirit shrine. See Baum, *Shrines*, Chapter Two.

⁵ Until the post-colonial era, pre-marital relations were not accepted by the Esulalu and appear to have been quite rare. It should be pointed out that unmarried girls also wrestle, but since they do not engage in combat they will not be discussed here. Their wrestling equipment does not include weapons.

⁶ Such shrines are not limited to Esulalu, but are also found in the neighboring Diola communities of Boulouf and Bandial, as well as the neighboring ethnic group known as Ehing. This broad distribution itself reinforces the contention of Diola oral historians that these shrines existed in the eighteenth century. For evidence from other regions see Peter Mark, "Economic and Religious Change among the Diola of Boulouf (Casamance), 1890-1940; trade, cash-cropping and Islam in southwestern Senegal", Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1976, p. 17. Marc Schloss, *The Hatchet's Blood: Separation, Power, and Gender in Ehing Social Life*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1988, p. 105. Francis G. Snyder, *Capitalism and Legal Change: An African Transformation*, New York: Academic Press, 1981, pp. 42-43.

⁷ Elenkine-Sergerh represents the Kalybillah half of Kadjinol. The shrine predates the Hassouka-Kafone war of the early eighteenth century, which resulted

in the transfer of Ecuhuh from Hassouka to Kafone. Some quarter shrines, such as Kafone's Dehouhou, include women as participants, while others like Elenkine-Sergerh exclude them. Interviews with Basayo Sambou, Kadjinol-Kandianka, 11/29/77; Sooti Diatta, Samatit, 12/21/78.

⁸ Some of these individuals were women who eventually passed their priestly role to men. The spring called Kannallia is closely linked to the Elucil shrine of Kadjinol-Kandianka. Interview with Etienne Manga, Kadjinol-Kandianka, 8/17/76. The spring called Cassissilli is linked to a shrine of the same name at Kagnout-Ebrouwaye. Interviews with Pakum Bassin and Djikankoulan Sambou, Kagnout-Ebrouwaye, 1/8/79.

⁹ Bruce Lincoln stresses the importance of religious justifications of war on behalf of a state. In stateless societies where individual townships and even neighborhoods act as independent units the need for religious legitimization may be less important because of the lack of institutional specialization and the greater personalization of community relations. On the religious legitimization of war, see Bruce Lincoln, "War and Warriors: An Overview", in Mircea Eliade, editor, *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, New York: Macmillan, 1987, V. 15, p. 340.

¹⁰ Interview with Boolai Senghor, Kadjinol-Sergerh, 6/10/78.

¹¹ For a more detailed discussion see Baum, *Shrines*, Chapter Three. Interviews with Antoine Houmandrissah Diedhiou, Kadjinol-Kafone, 2/27/78 and 8/1/78; Diaswah Sambou, Kadjinol-Kafone, 7/7/76 and 12/12/77.

¹² Interviews with Sinyendikaw Diedhiou, Kadjinol-Kafone, 4/7/78; Siopama Diedhiou, Kadjinol-Kafone, 3/20/78; Etienne Abbisenkor Sambou, Kadjinol-Kafone, 4/15/78. The vision could have occurred during a bout with African Sleeping Sickness whose symptoms resemble the descriptions of Kooliny's physical state.

¹³ Interview with Antoine Houmandrissah Diedhiou, Kadjinol-Kafone, 2/27/78. This is confirmed in interviews with Diashwah Sambou, Kadjinol-Kafone, 9/25/78; Ompa Kumbegeny Diedhiou of Kadjinol-Kafone and Boolai Senghor of Kadjinol-Sergerh, 6/13/78.

¹⁴ Group discussion with Djatti Sambou, Lampolly Sambou, and Edouard Sambou, Mlomp-Haer, 1/9/79.

¹⁵ This association of the loss of seminal fluid and the loss of physical power is common in many cultures from the ancient Greeks to modern New Guinea and the United States. On the importance of semen in the warrior culture of the Sambia of New Guinea, see Gilbert Herdt, *Guardians of the Flutes: Idioms of Masculinity*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1987, passim. Presently, in the United States, the belief seems to have particular credence among wrestlers and football coaches, but in the nineteenth century, it was supported by members of the Oneida community, health food advocates, and opponents of Mormonism.

¹⁶ This shrine is still regularly used to protect people from work accidents or if they enlist in the Senegalese army. I attended a number of such rituals. Interview with Sikakucele Diatta, Kadjinol-Kafone, 3/17/78.

¹⁷ This practice continued into the twentieth century when Diola were drafted into the French army to serve in the world wars and the Indochinese war. Many men carried medicines from Diola shrines with them in order to protect them from the weapons of the Germans and the Viet Minh. This raises serious questions about Robin Horton's suggestion that the instrumentality of African traditional religions' focus on lesser spirits is limited to a microcosm. See Robin Horton, "African Conversion", *Africa*, V.XI, 1971, p. 101-102.

Ritual specialists' preparation of medicines to protect warriors is extremely common in African and American Indian societies. On their use in Nilotc societies of East Africa, see Bruce Lincoln, *Priests, Warriors, and Cattle: A Study in the Ecology of Religions*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1981, p. 29. Sources on American Indian medicines are so numerous that I list only a few representative examples: Hamilton A. Tyler, *Pueblo Gods and Myths*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984, p. 227. Robert M. Utley, *The Last Days of the Sioux Nation*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978, p. 15.

¹⁸ Many Native American medicines were created as the result of dreams or visions by the user or created specifically for an individual supplicant by a spiritual healer.

¹⁹ Mangoy Djiba was one of the major sellers of such gris-gris. He was a marabout and the chief of the small Muslim settlement of Djeromait. Interviews with Antoine Houmandrissah Diedhiou, Kadjinol-Kafone, 4/4/78; Soolai Diatta and Jacques Lopi, Djeromait, 1/5/79. "L'administrateur de la Basse Casamance à Monsieur le Gouverneur de Sénégal", 1889. Archives Nationales de Sénégal, 13 G 464.

²⁰ Hyacinthe Hecquard, *Voyage sur la Côte et dans l'intérieur de l'Afrique Occidentale*, Paris: Imprimerie de Benaud, 1853, p. 110.

²¹ For a discussion of spiritual powers associated with Diola prophets and with charismatic spirit shrines, see Baum, *Shrines*, passim. See also: Marilyn R. Waldman with Robert M. Baum, "Innovation as Renovation: The 'Prophet' as an Agent of Change", in Michael A. Williams, et. al. *Innovation in Religious Traditions*, Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1992, pp. 248-250.

²² Witches' souls are believed to be able to travel at night, to assume various animal forms, and to attack the souls of other living beings. Those who have the same powers, but who use them to defend the community against witches are known as *ahoond*. See: Baum, "Crimes of the Dream World: French Trials of Diola Witches", forthcoming. Interviews with Antoine Houmandrissah Diedhiou, Kadjinol-Kafone, 6/25/78; Diaswah Sambou, Kadjinol-Kafone, 7/7/76; Boolai Senghor, Kadjinol-Sergerh, 8/14/78; Siopama Diedhiou, Kadjinol-Kafone, 6/25/78; Jacques Lopi and Soolai Diatta, Djeromait, 1/5/79.

²³ This purchasing of unusual skill in exchange for the lives of one's unborn children, or one's own future good health, is fairly common in West Africa. Sarah Brett-Smith has stressed this in her own research on the Bamana of Mali and Paul Stoller has seen this as important in the lives of Songhai sorcerers. See Paul Stoller and Cheryl Olkes, *In Sorcery's Shadow: A Memoir of Apprenticeship among the Songhay of Niger*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987, passim. Perhaps this high price of excellence is what lies behind the common West African practice of calling someone who is truly excellent, "bad".

²⁴ These rituals are described in oral traditions concerning the Koonjaen Wars of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Interviews with Diashwah Sambou, Kadjinol-Kafone, 2/2/78 and 4/25/78; Terence Galandou Diouf Sambou, Kadjinol-Ebankine, 2/19/78; Antoine Houmandrissah Diedhiou, Kadjinol-Kafone, 6/18/78; Michel Anjou Manga, Kadjinol-Kafone, 12/11/78; André Bankuul Senghor, Kadjinol-Kafone, 6/15/78. A similar ritual, known as *Hoonillo*, was performed as recently as the 1950's, on behalf of returning soldiers from Indochina.

²⁵ Robin Horton suggests that religion in Europe and America has abandoned this emphasis on the instrumental aspects of religion. "By the end of the nine-

teenth century the mainstream of Euro-American Protestant Christianity had dropped all pretence of providing a theory of how the world really worked, or a recipe for controlling the course of its affairs; and theologians and pastors concentrated on the encounter with God as the supreme and archetypal social relationship.” I would suggest that the rise of charismatic churches is indicative of a far narrower mainstream than Horton realized. The depersonalization of modern warfare poses different sorts of challenges to the religious experience of a soldier, but it appears that religious explanations and instrumentalities remain actively involved in such warfare. This was confirmed by Professor Joseph Guilmartin, a military historian and former helicopter pilot in Vietnam. Horton, “African Conversion”, p. 95 and passim.

²⁶ Suzanne Langer, cited in Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Harper and Row, 1973, p. 99.

²⁷ In the wake of sustained military defeats, witch eradication movements developed all over Africa. Dr. Maclaud, “La Basse Casamance et ses Habitants”, *Bulletin de la Société de la Science de Géographie de Paris*, 1907, passim. J.B. Peires, *The Dead Will Arise: Nongqawuse and the Great Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement of 1856-1857*, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1989, pp. 126-127.

²⁸ See Waldman with Baum, op. cit., pp. 241-284. Jean Girard, *Genèse du Pouvoir Charismatique en Basse Casamance (Sénégal)*, Dakar: IFAN, 1969.

ANCIENT GREEK AND ZULU SACRIFICIAL RITUAL A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS*

MICHAEL LAMBERT

Summary

In this paper, ancient Greek and Zulu sacrificial ritual are compared in order to test the validity of Burkert's hypothesis about the origins and function of sacrifice. Similarities and differences between the two ritual systems are analysed. The Zulus do not clearly differentiate between Olympian and chthonic deities and sacrifices and seem to sacrifice exclusively to or for the shades or ancestors. The absence of a fully-developed ancestor cult in ancient Greek religion (the cult of heroes and the cult of the dead bear some resemblance to one) seems to reflect the nature of a *pólis* culture which cuts across the boundaries of tribes and phratries: no such culture is evident amongst the Zulus and ancestor cult thus reflects the lineage and kinship system characterising Zulu life.

Burkert believes that sacrifice has its origins in the ritualisation of the palaeolithic hunt. Crucial aspects of the theory do not seem to be validated by Zulu thought-patterns: e.g. there is little or no trace of guilt or anxiety at ritual killings, a guilt which might be expected from a people deeply attached to their animals, often personified in praises addressed to them. Following G.S. Kirk, this paper attempts to illustrate that composite accounts of both ancient Greek and Zulu sacrifice acquire misleading emotional resonances which individual sacrifices might not have. This comparative study does not disprove Burkert's theory, but attempts to demonstrate that explanations offered in terms of origins or formative antecedents are fraught with speculative problems and throw no light on the motivation for sacrifice.

In this paper I have attempted a comparative analysis of ancient Greek and Zulu sacrificial ritual. The paper is divided into three sections—the first two survey the source material in order to examine the structure of sacrifice in both cultural systems, highlighting similarities precisely in order to understand the differences; the third attempts to use the comparative material in order to test the validity of Burkert's theory of the origins of sacrifice.¹ The paper concludes with general remarks on the validity of this sort of comparative approach in contemporary South Africa.

1. The Ancient Greek Evidence

In order to re-construct the course of an ancient Greek animal sacrifice,² we have to turn (*inter alia*) to descriptions of sacrifice

scattered throughout the Homeric epics, 5th century tragedy and Old and New Comedy. That our sources are often so consciously literary may occasionally prove problematic—as it does in Aristophanes' *Peace* where a ritual practice, scattering the spectators with barley grains (962), is simply not found elsewhere and is obviously intended for parodic (and thus comic) effect. Dramatic versions of sacrifice such as this have to be weighed against accounts in authors like Xenophon, Pausanias and Plutarch, and against inscriptions and the considerable iconography of sacrifice. What does emerge from a survey of the sources is that, although no description is identical in detail (as presumably no sacrifice in reality was), an overall structure emerges which remains unchanged for centuries. Thus, although it may be argued that Bronze Age sacrifices (say, on a beach at Pylos) or family sacrifices differ experientially from the impersonally grand state sacrifices of the *pólis*, the basic tri-partite structure endures—ritual preparation, the act of killing itself and the conclusion which usually involves the sharing of a meat meal.

One of our earliest full descriptions of a sacrifice occurs in Book 1 of Homer's *Iliad*. The priest, Chryses, has been ordered to make a sacrifice to Apollo on behalf of the Greeks struck by Apollo's plague.³ The holy offering (447) is assembled around the well-built altar (448). Before the killing itself, there is ritual hand-washing (449); after the hand-washing, the men take up the barley-grains⁴ to scatter over the victims (449). Before the grain is scattered, Chryses prays aloud to Apollo (451-456), carefully referring to his last petition's success (453-454) and to the reason for the present sacrifice (455-456). The men pray and throw the grain (458); the animals' heads are drawn back, their throats are slit and they are then skinned (459). They cut up the *meroí*, the thighs (460), which presumably means that they cut slices of meat from the thigh bones which are then wrapped in folds of fat (460-461) on which the raw meat is laid (461). This Chryses burns on the wood fire (462), after which he pours a libation of dark wine on to the offering (462-463); around him gather the young men with five-pronged forks (463), perhaps to stir up the fire or even skewer the meat. When the thigh-bones are completely burnt (464), and after the *splánkna*, the heart, lungs, liver and kidneys⁵ are eaten or simply tasted (464), they cut

up the meat into portions, skewer it on spits, roast it thoroughly and draw the spits off the flames (465-466). Then the feasting begins (468).⁶ After their hunger and thirst are satisfied (469), the *koûroi* fill mixing bowls to the brim with wine (470)—at first a few drops in every cup for the libation, then full cups for all (471). Music brings the ritual to a close—the rest of the day is spent in singing a lovely paean to Apollo, a song which delights his heart (472-474).

In this description, sacrificial roles (apart from Chryses') are not clearly defined; neither is there any reference to the ritual objects which feature in other descriptions of sacrifice in Homer. In Nestor's well-organised sacrifice to Athena in Book 3 of the *Odyssey*, there is a careful division of labour: Stratius and Echephron lead the heifer forward by the gilded horns (439); Aretus emerges from a room carrying a flowered bowl for ritual purification in one hand and a basket with barley-grains in the other (440-442); Thrasymedes carries the sharp axe (442-443) and Perseus holds the dish to catch the blood (442). This division of labour looks forward to the sort of elaborate assignment of roles, noticed by that inveterate traveller Pausanias, amongst the Eleans: there sacrifices are supervised by the *theokólos*, the servant of the god, the soothsayers, the libation-bearers, the interpreter, the flute-player and the woodman (5.15.10-12). Another important feature of Nestor's sacrifice which does not feature in Chryses' is that hairs are cut from the animal's head and are thrown into the fire (446)—this act occurs shortly before the animal is killed.⁷

No mention was made of special treatment of the beasts in Chryses' sacrifice, either before or after the killing. As we have already noticed, the horns of Nestor's heifer are gilded—in fact he has a goldsmith at hand to hammer the gold into foil and place it around the heifer's horns.⁸ In Book 10 of the *Iliad*, Diomedes prays to Pallas Athena for help and in return promises a bull, broad in the brow (292) and never led beneath the yoke (293)—a beast which will also have gold on its horns (294). Special post-sacrificial treatment of parts of the beast also occurs. After the duel between Hector and Telamonian Ajax in Book 7 of the *Iliad*, Agamemnon, rejoicing in Ajax's victory (312), sacrifices a five-year old bull to Zeus (314-315) and honours Ajax by giving him the long *nôton* (321-

322)—presumably slices of meat cut from the whole length of the backbone; in *Odyssey* 14 the faithful Eumeus honours Odysseus in precisely the same way (437-438). Other parts have a more sensational end: after the sacrificial feast in honour of Poseidon on the beach at Pylos, Athena, in disguise, orders the assembled party to cut up the victims' tongues,⁹ whereupon they are thrown on to the fire and libations poured over them.¹⁰

In the course of Homer's account of Chryses' sacrifice, no mention was made of the reactions of the participants to the procedure. In Book 19 of the *Iliad*, however, the Greeks sit quietly and listen to Agamemnon's prayer to Zeus (255-256), thus anticipating the more pervasive *euphemia*, the holy silence, of later sacrifices. After the beast is struck by the axe during Nestor's sacrifice to Athena, the women scream their *olologé*.¹¹ Penelope raises the same cry after she places grains in the basket and prays to Athena.¹² Interestingly, the ever-observant Herodotus (always in search of origins) thinks that this sort of female ritualised cry originated in Africa (4.189.3).

Before the sacrifice of Iphigenia in Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis*, the *euphemia*, the holy silence, is proclaimed before the sacrifice (1564); Kalchas places the sacrificial knife in the basket (1565-1566) and crowns the girl's head with a wreath (1567).¹³ Before the prayer to Artemis, Achilles takes the basket and circles the altar shaking the lustral water (1568-1569). So does Trygaeus' slave in Aristophanes' *Peace* (956-957)—one amusing aside of Trygaeus (addressed to the sheep) conjures up another feature of later sacrifice not found in Homer. Trygaeus' words, uttered after the beast has presumably been sprinkled with water (959), are *seiou sú takéos* “come on, quickly nod your head” (960). Thus the beast has to give its assent to the killing before it takes place. That this is not merely a piece of comic byplay we know from Plutarch's *Moralia*: “they considered the sacrifice of living animals a very serious matter and even now people are very wary of killing an animal before a drink-offering is poured over him and he shakes his head in assent”.¹⁴

Aegisthus' sacrifice in Euripides' *Electra* reveals a prominent feature of later sacrifice: the examination of the entrails for omens, a common occurrence in the pages of Xenophon's *Anabasis*.¹⁵ After Orestes has flayed the beast and the stomach is opened, Aegisthus

takes the *hiera* (the holy objects) in his hands and gazes earnestly at them. The liver lobe is missing from *tà splánkna* (827-828); the portal-vein and the gall-bladder seem to portend evil (828-829). In Teiresias' final confrontation with Creon in Sophocles' *Antigone*, the old seer tells Creon that he fearfully examined the sacrifice on the altar after he had heard the savage cries of birds in combat (1001-1006); the omens were ill indeed. From the fires the light of Hephaestus did not shine (1006-1007); the thigh portions were sodden, spluttering and smouldering; the gall-bladder split and scattered bile and the dripping thigh pieces lay stripped of their wrapping of fat (1007-1011). Whilst on the subject of bile, Knemon, the grumpy hero of Menander's *Dyskolos*, complains about the fact that the god gets only the incense and barley cake, the inedible tail-bone and the bile, whilst the scoundrel sacrificers gulp down the rest (447-453)!

Finally, we have to turn to inscriptions to learn that the skin of a sacrificial victim was often given to the officiating priest¹⁶ or sold to buy new votive offerings and new victims;¹⁷ to Aristophanes¹⁸ and Theophrastus¹⁹ to discover that in some places the skulls of bulls and rams together with the horns are preserved, in Burkert's words, "as permanent evidence of the act of consecration".²⁰

2. The Ancient Greek and Zulu Evidence: Some Similarities

For accounts of sacrifices amongst the Zulu, less detective work is necessary. Apart from accounts of Zulu religion in the works of Christian missionaries and ethnographers like Callaway, Samuelson and Bryant, there are two anthropological studies (one by Krige,²¹ the other by Berglund,²² who was also from a Christian missionary background) which are invaluable. Krige's work (originally published in 1936) is little more than a skilful summary of previous accounts of the Zulu, whereas Berglund's (first published in 1976) is shaped more by the scientific principles of post-war anthropology and by personal fieldwork carried out between 1959 and 1970. His account of ritual killing I have checked against that of a personal informant who participated in a sacrifice last year (1990).

Believing that "without similarities, difference is mean-

ingless,''²³ I shall begin by highlighting similarities between ancient Greek and Zulu ritual before analysing the differences.

The traditional Zulu animal sacrifice has precisely the same tripartite structure as that of the ancient Greek.²⁴ Before the ritual killing, there is the ritual washing of the person on whose behalf the sacrifice is being made to the ancestors or shades, as Berglund calls them;²⁵ after the killing, there is the feast of meat and beer.

Like Nestor's sacrifice to Athena in *Odyssey* 3, a Zulu sacrifice, witnessed and meticulously recorded by Berglund,²⁶ had a fixed division of labour. The host-sacrificer, who had promised a ritual killing if his son recovered from an operation, entered the cattle enclosure with five men, one of whom was the butcher; three of the rest helped to skin the beast, the remaining man being a representative from the local chief who was presented with choice helpings of meat after the sacrifice. Carrying the homestead ritual spear in his right hand (the weapon is not concealed in a basket of grains), the host-sacrificer pointed out the chosen beast dramatically. The beast was then led to the upper end of the cattle enclosure and made to face the chief hut in the kraal (the *indlunkulu*) as well as the host's son seated in the enclosure. A libation of beer (from a jam tin) was poured over the beast's back, the place of the shades,²⁷ while the host called on the shades to attend, as the Greeks prayed to the gods before scattering their grain at the animal. At this point *impempho*²⁸ could be rubbed on the animal's back while the praises of the shades are shouted. Elsewhere Berglund records that a novice diviner wept copiously after rubbing the back of an animal destined for sacrifice.²⁹ After the prayer to the shades, the animal was returned to its original position where the host, armed with his ritual spear, called on the shades again and passed his spear between the front and back legs of the beast without touching it. The animal was patted and rubbed, in particular its back and shoulders, as the place of the shades;³⁰ the butcher was summoned and handed the spear; an old woman (an honorary man in Zulu society), with wattle branch in hand, ran into the enclosure and strutted around the beast joyfully crying "Ii! Ii! Ii!" The officiant again called on the shades but, when the butcher sank the spear into the animal's neck, there was the Greek *euphemía*, the holy silence; as the cow fell, the host cried "Khala, nkomo yamadlozi! Khala!" (Cry, beast of the

shades, cry!). For the Zulus (in contrast with the Greeks), it is important for the animal to cry: for this reason goats are good for slaughtering as they “make much noise, calling the shades nicely”³¹ or thereby indicate that the shades have agreed to the slaughter.³² In response to the host’s cry, the onlookers raised their shouts and cries (the equivalent of the Greek *ololugeî*).

Instead of the cutting and burning of hairs from the beast’s head before the killing, a knot is tied in its tail afterwards. After the skinning of the beast and before the carcass was opened, specific pieces of meat (from the right shoulder-blade and right ribs), fat (from the navel) and blood, collected, as the Greeks did, in a vessel,³³ were carried by the host to the chief hut which was entered by the host and his son. Here they were bound together by a special offering of the meat, fat and blood to the lineage shades present in the *umsamo* (the sacred place of the shades in the hut), as the Greek sacrificers, standing around the altar, were bound together and separated from the other participants when they charred the selected pieces of the beast and tasted the *splánkna*. As the Greek offerings at this point were burnt in honour of the gods, so the Zulu offerings to the shades were charred in the fire in the hut.

The host-sacrificer then rejoined the others and supervised the dismemberment of the rest of the beast, after which specially selected portions of the beast (the right fore-leg, the back-bone, the head, the meat from the right buttock, the heart, liver, 4th stomach and gall) were carried to the *indlunkulu*: the meat was carried in the skin which the host-sacrificer spread over the floor in the *umsamo*. Next to the meat were laid the ritual jam tin filled with chyme (along with the gall perhaps the most important ingredient obtained from a Zulu sacrifice),³⁴ a calabash of beer and branches of fuchsia. Then the officiant and his son ate thin strips of meat, which he had cut from the *insonyama* (the meat covering the right rib) and roasted on the fire, and drank from the calabash of beer—it is this sharing of meat and beer with the shades which corresponds to the tasting of *tà splánkna* in the Greek sacrifice.

Unlike the Greek practice, the skin of the beast is then employed in the ritual: strips are cut from it and tied to the patient’s left arm. Thereafter the contents of the gall bladder, which we have already met in Sophocles’ *Antigone* as an integral part of sacrificial divina-

tion and which is regarded by the Zulus as the seat of the shades in man and beast,³⁵ are smeared over the son's shoulders, arms, neck, chest, operation scar and feet by his father, who then anoints himself: a few drops are also poured into the patient's mouth. The empty bladder is then fastened to the son's arm; the host-sacrificer fastens strips of skin to his left arm and the two men rub their hands with chyme before splashing the remainder on the hut-roof. The meat on the skin is covered with branches of fuchsia and the rest of the meat is distributed to the male and female participants. The chyme not taken to the chief hut is scattered in the cattle enclosure and the spilt blood covered up.

As the Greeks feasted on meat and wine, so the Zulus feasted on meat and beer, a celebration which continued the following day, at the end of which the host took the shades' burnt offerings and scattered them in the upper section of the cattle enclosure. Bones should be burnt and the ash spread in the enclosure as well;³⁶ the forehead and horns of the slaughtered beast are sometimes stuck on to the thatching of the hut occupied by the patient or to that of the chief hut where the ritual took place or to the fence of the cattle enclosure itself,³⁷ as they were affixed to the enclosure of the mother goddess at Çatal Hüyük,³⁸ and as they were gathered in the temple of Apollo at Dreros.³⁹

3. The Ancient Greek and Zulu Evidence: Some Differences

Apart from differences in sacrificial procedure, the major difference which this comparison brings to mind strikes at the core of ancient Greek and Zulu religion. The Greeks sacrificed mainly to the gods; the Zulus to or for the shades. Now, according to Berglund's informants, the Zulu do not worship the shades but simply speak to them "telling them everything" (*ukuthetha*).⁴⁰ Worship in a transcendental sense (*ukukhonza*) is reserved for the Lord-of-the-Sky who is distant from the people and can be approached through the shades.⁴¹ Rather amusingly, one of Berglund's informants said "I think of him as I would think of Dr. Verwoerd in Pretoria."⁴² I have no direct interest, but I think of him because I live under his rulership"; and yet another stated "We do not love him as we love the shades. He is too far away to love...We fear him.

He has *amawala* (a haphazard way of acting)”.⁴³ Rather like Zeus. The relationship between the Lord-of-the-Sky and the shades could perhaps best be illustrated by the example of rain: rain is sent to the earth by the *iNkosi Yezulu* (the Lord-of-the-sky) but “many agree that the shades are closely related to both the quantity and the time of the rainfall”.⁴⁴ Thus there is no urgent need to sacrifice to *iNkosi Yezulu*. Zulu religion seems to operate on a clearly defined horizontal level and a less clearly defined transcendental one, except where Christian influence is marked. The living and the dead are bound together in a community in which sacrifice becomes the food given to the elder members of the lineage who live, brood and watch over the younger from whom they expect their due.

What of ancient Greek religion? Can we speak of an ancestor cult in relation to it? If not, why not? The closest that Greek religion comes to an ancestor cult is in the cult of heroes, an extension of the cult of the dead. As we have noticed, in Zulu religion, the realm of the shades is well defined and the transcendent vaguely conceived—in ancient Greek religion, both areas are clearly delineated and stand in opposition to each other. The Olympian gods have altars on which sacrifices smoke and around which the sacrificers stand in festive attire; the gods of the earth and the dead have pits into which the blood of the victim is poured. There are no garlands, the hair is untied, sounds of lamentation replace the holy *euphemía*, black beasts at night (rather than white at sunrise) are the offerings of the dead. Even the vocabulary of Greek sacrifice distinguishes between the two spheres as the Zulu *ukukhonza* differs from *ukukhetha*: *hiereúein*, *thúein* of the gods above; *enagísein* (to devote, taboo) and *entémnein* (to cut into) of those below.⁴⁵ Like the Zulu shades, Greek heroes exert influence beyond the grave but not everyone becomes a hero. An ancestor might become a hero if “the family, cult association or city passes an appropriate resolution to accord heroic honours”;⁴⁶ unlike the shades, heroes are confined to special precincts (“heroa”, which may or may not contain the hero’s corpse⁴⁷) and, as a rule, receive their offerings once a year on the day appointed in the calendar.⁴⁸ Like the Zulu shades,⁴⁹ Greek heroes may reveal themselves in the form of snakes.⁵⁰ As the Zulu shades brood over one when they are hungry and need appeasement,⁵¹ so disaster in the fields or in the home may be

attributed to the wrath of a hero who needs appeasement.⁵² Just as the Zulu *isangoma* (seer) is called in to divine the sickness of the shades and establish its source and cause,⁵³ so the Greeks sought the counsel of a seer in times of stress related to the cult of heroes.⁵⁴

The general Greek cult of the dead also smacks of the ancestor cult with one important difference. Like the shades, the dead are fed, on the third and ninth day after burial, and thereafter on the days accorded to remembrance of the dead in the *pólis* calendar.⁵⁵ But there is no Greek ceremony corresponding to the Zulu *ukubuyisa* in which the dead shade is brought back after burial to be part of the community of shades and the living.⁵⁶ The dead may be conjured up as Odysseus does in Book 11 of the *Odyssey*; the dead must be appeased and kept in good cheer; the dead can appear as snakes but they are not consciously brought back to be part of the community. In fact the dead are feared as apotropaic customs practised during various festivals (like the *Anthesteria*) indicate.⁵⁷

If then there are these unmistakeable traces of ancestor cult among the Greeks, and if the ancestor cult is as Indo-European in origin as the Sky Father,⁵⁸ why did a fully-fledged ancestor cult not develop amongst the Greeks? Again the answer to this question (if indeed an answer is possible) strikes at the heart of not only Greek religion but of religions generally. Religious behaviour can only be interpreted in relation to other social facts—in relation to the totality of the culture. In Zulu culture the fact that the dead father of a homestead becomes an influential shade to his own and junior brother's children and his grandchildren through his sons, or that a woman becomes a shade to her own children (or even her junior brother's children if she dies at a ripe old age⁵⁹) is surely an extension of the strict kinship and lineage system which characterises Zulu life. In other words, the religious system of the Zulu tends to reflect their cultural milieu—thus an old Zulu woman can describe stars in terms of cattle;⁶⁰ thus the old belief that the flat earth is held up by four bulls carrying the earth on their horns.⁶¹ In a culture where the unifying focus of life is the clan and the family belonging to it, the full development of an ancestor cult is more possible than in a culture where the *pólis* and not the clan becomes the focus of solidarity. The *pólis* has its gods and great festivals which subsume and cut across the Greek *géne* and *phratriai*: temples on *akropóleis* and

cult images glinting in the gloom reinforce the belief in transcendent gods. The triad temple-altar-cult image is the vertical dimension of the horizontal triad, cattle enclosure—*umsamo*—snake.⁶²

Another important difference brought to the fore by the comparison between the sacrificial rituals is that the Zulu sacrificers experience a closer identification with the beast itself. This is not only reflected in the treatment of the gall, chyme and gall bladder but also in the various ways in which the skin is used. Bracelets of skin are worn by officiant, patient and relatives;⁶³ the sacrificer slaughtering animals in a rain-making ceremony places the wet skin over himself for the whole night;⁶⁴ the dead Zulu king was immediately wrapped in the still wet hide of a beast slaughtered for this purpose;⁶⁵ the diviner wears the criss-crossed strips of skin from the animal sacrificed at her initiation;⁶⁶ the skin of a sacrificed beast is used in divining and is beaten by the inquirers to arouse the shades to test the diviner's diagnosis.⁶⁷

There is thus an intimate association between cattle and human beings—"a cow is like a human", states one of Berglund's informants;⁶⁸ the cattle are in fact animals of the lineage shades as well and, in sacrificing to them, one gives them what is theirs. There is in the grandiose sacrifices of the *pólis* no direct relationship with the beast as the Greeks may have had with (for example) the pigs sacrificed by each individual before the initiation into the Eleusinian Mysteries or as Nestor and his fellow sacrificers may have had with their beast on the beach at Pylos. The Zulu host-sacrificer owns, values and loves the beast he slaughters. It is precisely because of a lack of suitable cattle, apart from other socio-economic and political factors, that ritual killing is not as frequent amongst the Zulu today.⁶⁹ The *pólis* was never in this position: an urban culture simply sells skins to buy more sacrificial animals.

Amongst the noticeable ritual differences is the fact that there is no scattering of grain over the beast before the Zulu sacrifice as there is in the ancient Greek sacrifice. The officiator dances or *giya*'s dramatically before the sacrifice, as if fighting off an imaginary foe⁷⁰—this may correspond to the scattering of grain, if this is to be interpreted as an aggressive act.⁷¹ However, if one turns to the older sources which record many Zulu practices now obsolete, it is apparent that at the Great Umkhosi, the second of the First Fruit

Ceremonies at which the king was fortified and the army strengthened, an ox was sacrificed after which corn was scattered over it and the people.⁷² This was obviously intended to bring fertility to the fields, for some of the seed and blood was mixed with the seed planted in the chief's main field—the sort of fertility magic indulged in by the women of Athens during the *Thesmophoria*.⁷³ What is significant is that this act does underline the connection between grain and slaughter, between the fertility of the fields, and the death of the beast.⁷⁴

Another important procedural difference between ancient Greek and Zulu sacrifice strikes at the core of the concluding discussion. The Greeks seem to make every attempt to conceal the violence of the act, particularly in post-Homeric accounts of sacrifice: the knife is concealed in a basket of grains; no vase painting represents the act of killing itself.⁷⁵ The Zulu sacrificers make no attempt to conceal the weapon; the *giya* almost seems to emphasise the violence of the act, in the manner of Herodotus' Scythians.⁷⁶ This violence is nowhere more evident than in the *iHlambo* (a purification post-mortem ceremony) for a member of the royal family in which the funeral hunt became an attack on an enemy tribe before the *iHlambo* beasts were killed and eaten.⁷⁷ The association of hunting, funerary ritual and sacrifice leads naturally into the last section of this paper which will attempt to test the validity of the Meuli-Burkert hypothesis.

4. Testing Burkert's Theory of the Origins of Sacrifice

Burkert's major study of sacrificial ritual, *Homo Necans*, was shaped by a number of significant theoretical influences. Jane Harrison's work on the association between myth and ritual and her application of Durkheimian functionalism to the study of religion;⁷⁸ Karl Meuli's study of the similarities between Greek sacrifice and the customs of hunting and herding societies, mostly in Siberia;⁷⁹ socio-biological studies like Konrad Lorenz's work *On Aggression* and structuralism which Burkert adapts to interpret the myth and ritual complex.⁸⁰

To give a simple but not simplistic synopsis of Burkert's theory is not easy—his style is opaquely suggestive and at times almost visionary but the major elements in his theory are clear enough.

Burkert stresses that the palaeolithic age, in which man was a hunter, occupies by far the largest slice of human history. Therefore aggression, necessary to kill and to bind the hunting group together, is an essential and deeply-ingrained element in man's nature, acquired over many years in this stage of his biological evolution. Yet side by side with this aggression is the guilt experienced by the hunter in killing a beast which he regards as quasi-human, a guilt evinced in the ritual attempt to restore or reconstitute the beast after the hunt—bone gathering, the raising of a skull and the stretching of the skin, as Meuli noticed.⁸¹ Hunting behaviour becomes ritualised in the act of sacrifice, precisely because the act of killing enhances the sense of community and preserves it from the destructive onslaught of intra-specific aggression. This becomes particularly evident during the Neolithic, when agriculture was "invented" and animals domesticated: hunting was not vital for the community's survival anymore, but ritual killing which preserved the binding force of the hunt and which controlled the inherent danger of intra-group aggression continued. So through hunting ritual and later sacrifice, society was shaped, defined and maintained—and rescued from destruction.

The second major aspect of Burkert's theory is the association between hunting, death and eating on the one hand and the evolution of funerary ritual on the other. From the start the elements of funerary ritual, he argues, derive from hunting. Hence the funeral feast, and the similarity between the treatment of the bones of the hunter's quarry and the bones of the dead.⁸² With the ritualisation of hunting behaviour, the idea of substitute sacrifice arises: the dead take the place of the quarry and, at the funeral feast, the reverse occurs. The place of the dead man is taken by the sacrificial animal.

The third important feature which Burkert introduces into his model of the origins of sacrifice is sex.⁸³ The aggression of the hunter, perhaps fuelled by mating fights, is closely identified with sexual desire but this desire has to be repressed for aggression has to achieve its goal and on the long hunt the "female" is not present but is waiting for the return of the hunter with his kill. Consequently, this sexual desire is projected into the shape of a "Mother Goddess" who presides over the hunt and demands the kill but who

is also (paradoxically) the giver of life. Hence, argues Burkert, the mother goddess figures at the earliest civilised settlement (Çatal Hüyük in Anatolia) are surrounded by emblems of sacrifice and the hunt, like the heads of bulls and horns. The mother-goddess demands death in order to give life and the ritual of sacrifice brings man face to face with the notion that killing and death are necessary pre-requisites for life. This is the message which the sacrificial act communicates to its participants.

So civilised life is born of its antithesis, the encounter with death:⁸⁴ for Burkert only *homo necans* can become *sapiens et religiosus*. Furthermore this civilised life can only endure by giving a “ritual form to the brute force that still lurks in men”.⁸⁵ Hence the pervasive persistence of sacrificial ritual in Greek religion through the ages, a ritual which constantly re-establishes “the deadly outdoor reality of the hunting era within the circle of civilisation, both to call that civilisation into question and to renew it”.⁸⁶

Turning to the sacrificial act itself, Burkert comments on the threefold rhythm which reflects the age-old situation of the hunter⁸⁷—the inhibited labyrinthine beginning (as if trying to distract attention from the central point, the act of killing),⁸⁸ the terrifying midpoint itself and the scrupulously tidy conclusion. The core of the act is the experience of death brought about by human violence. Thus the progress of the hunt is re-enacted: the throwing of the barley grain, the most ancient agricultural product, is an aggressive gesture “like beginning a fight”;⁸⁹ the animal nods to give its consent (Meuli’s “Unschuldskomödie”, the “comedy of innocence” devised by man to assuage his guilt); the kill, the emotional climax of the act, is marked by a scream of fear or triumph or both;⁹⁰ the hunter’s guilt is revealed and acted out in the symbolic restoration of the beast. The bones, especially the thigh bones and the pelvis with the tail, are put on the altar “in the proper order”⁹¹ and skulls and goat-horns are erected. Reparation is complete. The social order, temporarily dislocated, is restored and renewed in the communion of the feast.

Application of Burkert’s hypothesis to Zulu sacrifice is compelling. The Zulu sacrificers are separated from the rest of the community in the cattle enclosure like the Männerbund united in aggression before the hunt; the host carries the spear, the weapon

of the hunt; he *giya's* (dances) before the beast as if about to attack; the quarry is cornered, but cornered in a cattle enclosure. The sacrificer pats and rubs the beast; this is his beast, a beast he loves. Affection rises momentarily, followed perhaps by anxiety and guilt: the novice-diviner runs in tears from the byre. The host-sacrificer passes his spear symbolically between the front and back legs of the beast—he could strike but does not. The blow is struck—there is an uncanny silence. Then guilt is swamped in noise as the host-sacrificer tells the beast to cry to the shades and the onlookers shout and cheer. Through the traumatic kill, solidarity has been engendered. The hunters have found their quarry but the tensions implicit in hunting a domesticated beast are brought to the fore: it has to be told to bellow. There is careful attention to the manner in which the carcass and skin are treated; in the hut, specially selected parts of the beast are laid on the skin. The animal is symbolically re-constituted—even the animal's head is raised on the thatch roof of the hut. Traces of the killing are obliterated: here is Burkert's scrupulously tidy conclusion. The social fabric disrupted by the killing re-asserts itself in the consequent feast of meat and beer. Aggression with its attendant guilt and anxiety has been played out in the ritual which contains the central but ambiguous truth: death is a pre-requisite for life. And so, as in Greek rituals and festivals, sacrifice marks the crisis points in Zulu life from birth to puberty to death. Acts of killing signpost the beginning of new phases of life, on both sides of the grave. A brief look at Zulu folk tales (or nursery tales as Callaway calls them)⁹² suggestively complements features of this interpretation of Zulu sacrifice. Cannibalism is a predominant theme in many folk-tales⁹³ and in one remarkable tale, the hero, closely attached to an ox which is stolen from him and killed, brings the animal back to life by placing its flesh and bones neatly together again.⁹⁴ The complementary motifs of cannibalism (perhaps arising from human sacrifice), affection for the beast and re-constitution could suggest a mythical exploration of the tensions implicit in the sacrificial act.⁹⁵

So do we thus conclude that testing Burkert's theory in another sacrificing culture, remote in time and place from that of Ancient Greece and its Near Eastern heritage, confirms his hypothesis? Did Zulu sacrificial ritual have its origin in Palaeolithic hunting ritual

as well? Does this ritual also engender *Angst* in order to overcome it? Is it now time to proclaim yet another Jungian archetype—that the violent and sacred are inextricably linked and that man has to be both *necans* and *sepeliens* before he can become *sapiens et religiosus*?

Regrettably it is not that simple. There is one vital source of evidence which we have in the case of the Zulus but lack in the case of the ancient Greeks: the evidence of the people themselves. This does not seem to confirm Burkert's hypothesis: nowhere is there any sign that the Zulus explicitly understand sacrificial killing in this way.⁹⁶ A good example of this is the Zulu attitude to the erection of the skulls and horns of ritually slaughtered animals (the restitution part of the theory). According to some, they are a decoration, to others a reminder of “the thing we did with our animal”, or a reminder for the shades that ritual killing has been performed for the decorated household.⁹⁷

As has already been noted, the Zulus, in contrast to the Greeks, make no attempt to conceal the violence: where then are the *Angst* and guilt, particularly expected from pastoralists, deeply attached to their animals? The host-sacrificer may have patted his beast; the novice diviner may have run in tears from the byre, but these are isolated incidents which do not occur at every animal sacrifice. Zulu informants confirm that they know nothing of guilt and anxiety at ritual killings.⁹⁸ In fact, in testing the Burkert hypothesis, I have committed the very methodological fault to which G.S. Kirk draws attention:⁹⁹ incorporating the piecemeal into a whole, a glorified Zulu amalgam which thus takes on a significance the individual occurrences might not have had.¹⁰⁰

Precisely the same fault is committed in accounts of ancient Greek sacrifice. Kirk notes that the Homeric picture is not, in itself, consistent; furthermore to cull details from the Homeric and post-Homeric evidence and present it all as a “glorified ‘classical’ amalgam”¹⁰¹ (as some of the best handbooks on Greek religion do)¹⁰² can obviously be misleading. Ritual details crucial to Burkert's interpretation of sacrifice (such as persuading the victim to consent to the killing and concealing the weapon in the basket of grains) are not found in Homer and even the *olologé*, the ritual shriek, is rarely found in Homer and at moments troublesome for those striving after a general theory of sacrifice.¹⁰³ Why do these

details occur or occur more regularly in later accounts, yet further removed from the Palaeolithic?

Even if the Zulus however, do not seem to understand sacrifice in terms of the hunting hypothesis, this does not disprove it. For, do all the participants in ritual acts ever know precisely why they are performing an act? Could the ancient Greek sacrificer explain why he threw grains at the beast or cut hairs from its head and threw them into the fire? Can the Zulu sacrificer explain why certain parts of the beast are burnt for the shades and not others? The Greek sacrificer would probably say “because this is part of the *arkésthai*, the beginning” or “because this is ancestral custom” as Pausanias said in reference to the fact that the Greeks did not eat oath sacrifices;¹⁰⁴ the Zulu sacrificer would say “because these are the parts of the shades, this is their special food”. In other words, explanations might be offered in terms of tradition or immediate function but not in terms of origin.

Like Jane Harrison and the other Cambridge ritualists, Burkert is concerned with origins, or rather with an explanation of religious structures and behaviour in terms of origins (or “formative antecedents” as he prefers to call them)¹⁰⁵ and any such attempt is always fraught with speculative traps. Burkert himself is aware of this—“our conception of primitive man and his society will always be a tentative construct”;¹⁰⁶ elsewhere he speaks of an “act of faith”.¹⁰⁷ This search for an *Urreligion* occasionally leads him into committing what Evans-Pritchard once called the “If I were a horse...fallacy”¹⁰⁸—If I were a primitive man, I would think or feel so-and-so. Thus we have attempts to psychologise the sexual frustrations of the palaeolithic hunter.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, Burkert is too rigorous a scholar not to be aware of the highly controversial nature of the Palaeolithic “evidence”;¹¹⁰ notions of Palaeolithic guilt and *Angst* are also difficult to take seriously as other scholars have intimated.¹¹¹ Yet he believes that the question “where from?” is a “legitimate or even necessary complement to functional and structural interpretations. Ethology reopens and enlarges the perspective of history”.¹¹²

This may indeed be so (particularly for the convinced ethologist), but as far as sacrifice is concerned, the question “where from?” would only seem to be relevant, if it threw any light on the motiva-

tion for animal sacrifice. Theophrastus, with all the neat schematization of his Aristotelian training, gives three reasons for an ancient Greek sacrifice: *é gār timēn é dià kárin é dià kreian tōn agathón* (either because of honour or gratitude or need of good things).¹¹³ However, van Straten has demonstrated that this list is far from exhaustive for the Greeks.¹¹⁴ Similarly, Krige claimed that the Zulus distinguished two classes of sacrifice—the thanksgiving and the scolding sacrifice which takes place “when the people of the kraal die and when things are going wrong, in which case the officiator seriously inquires what they have done to be so persecuted by their ancestors”.¹¹⁵ However, Berglund’s Zulu informants were reluctant to commit themselves merely to two categories and strongly disapproved of the idea of scolding the ancestors.¹¹⁶

In fact, as Kirk has pointed out, the motivation for animal sacrifice is highly complex and varies greatly from people to people: resorting to the simplistic “do ut des” explanation is inadequate, precisely because gift-giving, as the comparative material confirms, involves a multiplicity of motivations.¹¹⁷ It is the complex psychology surrounding each sacrificial act which seems remote from the palaeolithic action pattern: to kill, to distribute, to eat. This may have shaped the ritual framework of sacrifice, but seems to have little to do with the multifarious interactions with that tradition. Gift-giving, too, may be a stable, evolutionary strategy or one of the most important “konfliktvermeidenden Prozesse” in the history of human communities,¹¹⁸ but *thanksgiving*, the motivation for many ancient Greek and Zulu sacrifices, and the offering of bloodless sacrifices, common in ancient Greece and contemporary Africa, seem very remote from the threefold hunting action.¹¹⁹ Even if there are links in the evolutionary chain between hunting apes, men sharing the meat after a palaeolithic hunt and the subsequent symbolic ritualisation of this act in sacrificial thanksgiving, these are impossible to recover, as Burkert himself implies.¹²⁰ Ethology may reopen the perspective of history, but it is a perspective too narrowly inflexible and deterministic, adequately to account for the behaviour of the very creators of that history.

To conclude: testing Burkert’s hypothesis in another sacrificing culture does not decisively prove or disprove his theory.¹²¹ It makes it seem less attractive; it makes one wonder whether any search for

origins or formative antecedents or global theories of sacrifice is doomed¹²² and whether the approach of the structuralists is not the more profitable.¹²³ However, the labour, I hope, has not been in vain. For what does emerge from any comparative study of this nature is that more questions are raised than answers provided, that insights into one's own discipline, previously muddled or woolly, are honed into shape, that insights into Zulu thought-patterns are provided by the ancient Greeks and vice versa.¹²⁴ It is this fact which makes our position as classicists in South Africa exciting; we live amongst peoples who still sacrifice. I say this not in the spirit of a patronising Victorian ethnographer-classicist who calls in the anthropologist to deal with what Dodds called the "disagreeably primitive things poking up their heads through the cracks in the fabric of Periclean rationalism",¹²⁵ but as one anxious to demonstrate that the study of the Classics in this country can never be irrelevant or pointless. For, as Burkert says, in the pessimistic conclusion to *Homo Necans* wherein he reflects on the breakdown of ritual in the modern world and the consequent unleashing of unchannelled aggression, "we can only hope that primitivism and violence will not be released unbridled. In any case, our knowledge of the traditions that proved themselves in the past and thus survived in the various experiments of human development should not be lost as we proceed, by trial and error, toward an uncertain future".¹²⁶ In contemporary South Africa, no words could be more apt.

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¹ See Walter Burkert, "Greek Tragedy and Sacrificial Ritual", *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 7, 1966, 87-121; "Killing in Sacrifice: A Reply", *Numerus* 25,

1978, 77-79; *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1979), pp. 54-56; *Homo Necans. The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1983); *Anthropologie des religiösen Opfers* (München: von Siemens Stiftung, 1987²); *Greek Religion* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1985), pp. 55-59; "The Problem of Ritual Killing", in R.G. Hamerton-Kelly (ed.), *Violent Origins* (Stanford Univ. Press, 1987), pp. 149-176.

² In this analysis I have chosen to concentrate on the regular *thusía*, the animal sacrifice followed by a meat meal, as this type of sacrifice is the most relevant to the succeeding comparison. For a discussion of the different types of ancient Greek sacrifice, see W. Burkert, "Glaube und Verhalten: Zeichengehalt und Wirkungsmacht von Opferritualen", in J. Rudhardt and O. Reverdin (eds.), *Le sacrifice dans l'antiquité* (Genève: Fondation Hardt, 1981), pp. 107 ff.

³ For the purposes of this discussion, I have used the Oxford Classical Text of Homer's *Iliad* (edited by D.B. Monro and T.W. Allen, Oxford 1969, repr.) and the OCT of Homer's *Odyssey* (edited by T.W. Allen, Oxford 1979, repr.).

⁴ From the *kanéon*, the basket, presumably. Cf. *Od.* 3.442 where Aretos carries the grains for the sacrificial ritual in a basket.

⁵ See Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford, 1953, repr.), s.v. *splánknōn*, *tó*.

⁶ For a formulaic repetition of most of the details in this description, see *Iliad* 2.410; 421-431.

⁷ A feature of the oath sacrifice in which the victim is completely destroyed (*sphágia*). See *Iliad* 3.273-274; 19.254; 267-268. cf. Pausanias 5.24.9-11.

⁸ *Od.* 3.425-426; 436-438.

⁹ *Od.* 3.332. There were 81 of them (*Od.* 3.7-8).

¹⁰ *Od.* 3.341.

¹¹ *Od.* 3.448-450.

¹² *Od.* 4.761; 767.

¹³ Rather than the victim, the sacrificer, Aegisthus, wears a garland of myrtle while sacrificing to the Nymphs in Euripides' *Electra* (778).

¹⁴ *Q. conv.* 8.8.729.

¹⁵ e.g. *An.* 6.4.9; 6.4.12-16; 6.4.19-20.

¹⁶ See *IG* 1² 190.23; *IG* 11¹ 1356.5; 1361.4-5; *SIG*³ 1002.3, 1004.30; 1010.5.

¹⁷ *SIG*³ 1044, 49-50; cf. 982, 23-28.

¹⁸ *Plut.* 938-943; see Schol. in *Plut.* 943.

¹⁹ *Char.* 21.7; cf. M. Nilsson, *Geschichte der Griechischen Religion*. Erster Band. (München: Beck, 1955²), p. 88. "Die Sitte, die Gebeine und Hörner der geopferten Tiere auf dem Opferplatz anzuhäufen und die Schädel anzunageln, ist weit verbreitet."

²⁰ *Homo Necans*, p. 6; cf. *Greek Religion*, p. 92.

²¹ E.J. Krige, *The Social System of the Zulus* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1950). See Krige's bibliography (op. cit. pp. xvii-xix) for a list of the older sources. Of these, H. Callaway's *The Religious System of the Amazulu* (London: Trübner, 1870) is especially interesting as a primary source, as it contains collected oral evidence in Zulu with an English translation. The 19th century prejudices of the Reverend Canon Callaway, who was remarkably enlightened, nevertheless have to be guarded against. Extracts from other 19th century sources have been collected in I. Hexham, *Texts on Zulu Religion* (Lewiston: Mellen, 1987). *The James Stuart Archive*, edited by C. de B. Webb and J.B. Wright (Pietermaritzburg: Univ. of Natal Press, 1976-1986), vols. 1-4, is another invaluable source of

collected oral evidence which contains frequent scattered references to ritual killing and religious beliefs, particularly those concerning the shades (the *amadlozi*).

²² A.-I. Berglund, *Zulu Thought-Patterns and Symbolism* (Cape Town: Philip, 1989, repr.).

²³ The words are those of S.C. Humphreys, *Anthropology and the Greeks* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 4.

²⁴ Berglund (op. cit., p. 220) notes that, in Zulu, ritual slaughtering is referred to as *umsebenzi* (lit. "work") or *ukuhlabela amadlozi* (lit. "slaughter for the shades"). Mr. A. Koopman and Mr. H. Hlengwa of the Department of Zulu, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, confirm that *umsebenzi* refers to the whole sacrificial process (from start to finish), whereas *ukuhlabela* refers to the act of killing itself [see C.M. Doke and B.W. Vilakazi, *Zulu-English Dictionary* (Witwatersrand Univ. Press, 1958 repr.), s.v. *hlabo* 2]. *Umsebenzi* ("work") recalls the Greek use of *érdein* (cf. its cognate *érgon* "work") and *rhéssein* "to do, to act" of sacrifice. See Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford, 1953, repr.), s.v. cf. the Latin use of *operari* ("to be at work") for sacrifice. See Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford 1969, repr.), s.v. 1B; *TLL IX*, 2: V, s.v. *operor* B, p. 690. Sacrifice is the ritual work of the community. Cf. Plut. *Q. conv.* 8.8. 729 for the Theophrastean notion that sacrifice was introduced as a result of population pressure and in order to protect the fruits of the earth from destruction. *etí d'hómos tarattómenoi kai dei-mainontes 'érdeii mèn ekáloun kai 'rhéssein'...* (nevertheless they were still confused and fearful about what they did and called it "making" and "doing".) Plutarch considers these terms to be euphemisms, devised to cloak the horror of killing a living being in morally neutral terms. There is no sign in Zulu culture that *umsebenzi* is regarded in this way.

²⁵ op. cit., p. 29. Berglund prefers this term to "ancestors" as "ancestors" suggests the distant dead, separate from the living, whereas, in Zulu thought, the dead and living are intimately associated in one community.

²⁶ op. cit., pp. 214-219.

²⁷ Berglund, p. 147.

²⁸ A small yellow-flowered "everlasting" which is regarded as particularly appropriate for offerings to the shades because, like the shades, it never withers or dies. For botanical and ritual details concerning this plant, see Berglund pp. 112-115; cf. Krige p. 294.

²⁹ op. cit., p. 164.

³⁰ Berglund, p. 228.

³¹ Berglund, p. 111.

³² Berglund, p. 170; cf. Krige, p. 291.

³³ Berglund, p. 229; cf. Krige, p. 294.

³⁴ Berglund, p. 129.

³⁵ Berglund, p. 110.

³⁶ Berglund, p. 240.

³⁷ Berglund, p. 240.

³⁸ See J. Mellaart, *The Neolithic of the Near East* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975), p. 109.

³⁹ *Homo Necans* p. 6, n. 26.

⁴⁰ op. cit., p. 198.

⁴¹ Berglund, p. 43.

⁴² The South African premier and grand architect of apartheid, assassinated in 1966.

- ⁴³ Berglund, p. 42.
- ⁴⁴ Berglund, p. 53.
- ⁴⁵ See W. Burkert, *Greek Religion*, p. 200.
- ⁴⁶ ibid., p. 206.
- ⁴⁷ ibid., pp. 203, 205.
- ⁴⁸ ibid., p. 205.
- ⁴⁹ Berglund, p. 94.
- ⁵⁰ *Greek Religion*, p. 206.
- ⁵¹ Berglund, pp. 127 ff.
- ⁵² *Greek Religion*, pp. 206-207.
- ⁵³ Berglund, p. 261.
- ⁵⁴ *Greek Religion*, p. 207.
- ⁵⁵ ibid., p. 194.
- ⁵⁶ For the *ukubuyisa*, see Krige, pp. 169-170.
- ⁵⁷ See *Homo Necans*, pp. 218-219; *Greek Religion* pp. 195; 238-239.
- ⁵⁸ See *Greek Religion*, p. 201.
- ⁵⁹ Berglund, pp. 120-122.
- ⁶⁰ "When it has rained and the cattle are driven to the grazing grounds, they sometimes tramp through the mud and their feet go through the floor of the sky. Then the light comes through" (Berglund, p. 32).
- ⁶¹ Berglund, p. 32.
- ⁶² Krige (p. 291) refers to the cattle kraal as the "Zulu temple".
- ⁶³ Berglund, p. 239.
- ⁶⁴ ibid., p. 55.
- ⁶⁵ See A.T. Bryant, *The Zulu people as they were before the white man came* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1950), p. 526; Krige, op. cit., p. 171.
- ⁶⁶ Berglund, pp. 170-171.
- ⁶⁷ ibid., pp. 186-187.
- ⁶⁸ ibid., p. 110.
- ⁶⁹ Berglund, p. 214.
- ⁷⁰ Krige, p. 293.
- ⁷¹ See *Homo Necans*, pp. 44-45.
- ⁷² Krige, pp. 249, 257.
- ⁷³ See *Greek Religion*, pp. 242-246, cf. J.J. Winkler, "The Laughter of the Oppressed", in *The Constraints of Desire* (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 188-209.
- ⁷⁴ A theme which Burkert's work shares with that of the French structuralist school. See, for example, J.-P. Vernant, "At Man's Table: Hesiod's Foundation Myth of Sacrifice", in M. Detienne and J.-P. Vernant (eds.), *The Cuisine of Sacrifice among the Greeks* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 74 ff.; J.L. Durand's *Sacrifice et labour en Grèce ancienne* (Paris/Rome, 1986) is particularly relevant here.
- ⁷⁵ See J.-P. Vernant, "Théorie générale du sacrifice et mise à mort dans la θυσία Grecque", in J. Rudhardt et O. Reverdin (eds.), *Le sacrifice dans l'antiquité* (Genève: Fondation Hardt, 1980), p. 7.
- ⁷⁶ See F. Hartog, "Self-cooking Beef and the Drinks of Ares", in *The Cuisine of Sacrifice among the Greeks*, p. 176.
- ⁷⁷ Krige, op. cit., p. 173.
- ⁷⁸ See *Homo Necans*, pp. xiii-xiv.
- ⁷⁹ ibid., pp. 12 ff.
- ⁸⁰ ibid., pp. xiii-xiv. For Burkert's convincing criticisms of Lévi-Straussian structuralism, see *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual*, pp. 10-14. For a succinct synopsis of these criticisms, see L.J. Alderink, "Greek Ritual and

Mythology: The work of Walter Burkert," *Religious Studies Revue* 6, 1980, 1-13. For trenchant criticism of Burkert's work, see N. Robertson, "Some recent work in Greek Religion and Mythology", *Echos du Monde Classique* 34, 1990, 419-438.

⁸¹ ibid., p. 16.

⁸² ibid., pp. 48 ff.

⁸³ ibid., pp. 58 ff.

⁸⁴ ibid., p. 212.

⁸⁵ ibid., p. 45.

⁸⁶ ibid., p. 134.

⁸⁷ Anticipatory renunciation, the savage act, pleasurable gratification (*Homo Necans*, p. 135); cf. Burkert's "The Problem of Ritual Killing", in R.G. Hamerton-Kelly (ed.), *Violent Origins* (Stanford Univ. Press, 1987), pp. 177-178: "Thus the sequence "to kill—to distribute—to eat" is a very general and most important configuration in the construction of human societies. It evidently evolved in Palaeolithic hunting and provided the guidelines for animal sacrifice."

⁸⁸ *Homo Necans*, p. 12.

⁸⁹ ibid., pp. 4-5.

⁹⁰ ibid., p. 5.

⁹¹ ibid., p. 6. This is Burkert's translation of Hesiod's *euthetisás* (*Th.* 541) from *euthetisdo*, "to set in order, arrange orderly" [see Liddell & Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford, 1953, repr.) s.v. *euthetéō* II.]. Not a very convincing reference. The word occurs nowhere else in Homer or Hesiod and, as far as I can ascertain, in no other account of sacrificial ritual. In M.L. West's commentary (published before *Homo Necans*) the word is translated as "decking them (the bones) out attractively" and West adds the following interesting comment ad loc. "This procedure (i.e. carefully arranging the bones in their natural sequence) is attested for the Lapps, but is hardly to be assumed for the Greeks, who burned thigh-bones, and sometimes also hip-bones, back-bones or shoulder-blades, but not complete skeletons" [Hesiod *Theogony* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1978 repr.), p. 319]. One thus suspects that Meuli's Siberian hunters have found their way into Hesiod's account of why the gods get only fat and bones.

⁹² See H. Callaway, *Nursery Tales, Traditions and Histories of the Zulus* (London: Trübner, 1868).

⁹³ Callaway, pp. 155-164; Krige, p. 355.

⁹⁴ Krige pp. 358-359.

⁹⁵ For Burkert's views on cannibalism and sacrifice, see "The Problem of Ritual Killing", pp. 175-176.

⁹⁶ The structuralists would argue that the Greeks did not do so either and clearly differentiated between hunting and sacrifice. See, for example, M. Detienne, "Culinary Practices and the Spirit of Sacrifice", in *The Cuisine of Sacrifice among the Greeks*, pp. 9 ff; J.-L. Durand and A. Schnapp "Sacrificial Slaughter and Initiatory Hunt", in C. Bérard (ed.) *The City of Images* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1989), pp. 61 ff; P. Vidal-Nacquet "Hunting and Sacrifice in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*", in J.-P. Vernant and P. Vidal-Nacquet (eds.), *Tragedy and Myth in Ancient Greece* (Brighton: Harvester, 1981), pp. 152-153.

⁹⁷ Berglund, p. 108. Cf. the reason proffered by Theophrastus' show-off: *hópos hoi eisíontes ídosin hóti Boún éthuse* (so that those entering could see that he had sacrificed an ox) *Char.* 21.7; cf. J.Z. Smith's comments on Burkert's paper in *Violent Origins*, pp. 181-182: "The bones could represent an insignia, a trophy, a resurrection—there are all sorts of possibilities."

⁹⁸ I owe this information to Mr. M. Hlengwa of the Department of Zulu, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. What guilt there is appears to be related to sacrificing to the ancestors *per se*, especially in a hostile Christian environment, rather than to the actual kill, although there may be individuals who express their aversion to the blood-letting. Further confirmation of Mr. Hlengwa's view is provided by L. Molefe's unpublished Masters thesis *An Analysis of the Praises of Domestic Animals* (University of Natal, 1992) which examines the praises bestowed on domestic animals by largely illiterate Zulu poets and workers in the Impendle and Bulwer areas (near Pietermaritzburg). Mr. Xaba, one of Mr. Molefe's informants, explains that his love for animals influenced him in the compilation of praises ("I feed them, I stay with them. I talk to them, they understand me" p. 170). Significantly, Mr. Xaba does not suggest that he feels guilty when a much-loved domestic animal is slaughtered ("We can even slaughter the famous bull for an ancestral ceremony" p. 178). Most interestingly, Mr. A. Koopman has collected oral evidence which relates to Zulu praises for wild animals: before a hunt the animal is informed of the intentions of the hunter and, after the kill, there is an apology addressed to the animal, clearly to expiate the hunter's guilt. (In the manner of the rationalizations devised by pygmy elephant-hunters. See J.Z. Smith, "The Bare Facts of Ritual", in *Imagining Religion* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 62.) Perhaps it is not surprising that this guilt has not been transferred to the domestic sphere—for there should be no guilt involved in killing for the shades what is rightfully theirs.

⁹⁹ See "Some Methodological Pitfalls in the Study of Ancient Greek Sacrifice (in Particular)", in *Le sacrifice dans l'antiquité*, pp. 41-80.

¹⁰⁰ art. cit., pp. 61 ff.

¹⁰¹ The words are Kirk's, art. cit., p. 62.

¹⁰² See e.g. W. Burkert, *Greek Religion*, pp. 55-57.

¹⁰³ See art. cit., pp. 65-66.

¹⁰⁴ 5.24.9-11 (see n. 7).

¹⁰⁵ See the discussion on J.Z. Smith's paper in *Violent Origins*, p. 212.

¹⁰⁶ *Homo Necans*, p. 17; *Anthropologie des religiösen Opfers*, pp. 29-30.

¹⁰⁷ *Homo Necans*, p. 73. Cf. Z. Stewart's review of *Homo Necans* in *American Journal of Philology* 98, 1977, 324: "The demonstration is brilliant, but at the end, to bring it all together, one must make a leap of faith—such a leap as is demanded at the beginning of the whole theory of early man and is made deceptively easy by Burkert's gift for vivid presentation."

¹⁰⁸ See E.E. Evans Pritchard, *Theories of Primitive Religion* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1965), pp. 43-47.

¹⁰⁹ *Homo Necans*, p. 81.

¹¹⁰ See "The Problem of Ritual Killing", in *Violent Origins*, pp. 152, 166. Cf. B. Mack's introduction to *Violent Origins*, p. 29: "...the evidence available for a ritualisation of the hunt during the Palaeolithic period is very skimpy, and such evidence as there is, is amenable to other explanations. The hunting hypothesis is now in serious trouble among paleoanthropologists." J.Z. Smith's "So, if Walter Burkert proves something about the Paleolithic era, it's still not data, because I don't admit anything from that era as evidence" (*Violent Origins*, p. 206) is a little reckless.

¹¹¹ See the discussion arising from Burkert's "Glaube und Verhalten", in *Le sacrifice dans l'antiquité*, pp. 126 ff.

¹¹² See "The Problem of Ritual Killing", in *Violent Origins*, p. 160.

¹¹³ *Peri euseb.* fr. 12 Pötscher, 42-44.

¹¹⁴ See F.T. van Straten, "Gifts for the Gods", in H.S. Versnel (ed.), *Faith, Hope and Worship* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), pp. 66-68.

¹¹⁵ op. cit., p. 289.

¹¹⁶ op. cit., pp. 220-1. Other reasons for sacrifice include to appease the anger of the shades and so remove any guilt or pollution arising from a crime like murder; to feed the shades when they are sick and to mark a crisis time (a rite of passage). Some sacrifices are made to ask the shades to cure the sick. See C. de B. Webb and J.B. Wright, *A Zulu King Speaks* (Pietermaritzburg: Univ. of Natal Press, 1987, repr.), p. 107. In addition, Harriet Ngubane (*Body and Mind in Zulu Medicine*, London: Academic Press, 1977) includes sacrifices to place a newborn baby under the shades' protection, to integrate the dead with the shades, to ask for their blessing before any major undertaking and show them 'their new home', if their descendants move house (p. 59).

¹¹⁷ art. cit., pp. 49, 75. A propos African sacrifices, J.S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Oxford: Heinemann, 1990, repr.), warns against generalization as "the practice of making sacrifices and offerings varies so widely" (p. 59). J. Henninger's remarks in M. Eliade (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York/London: MacMillan, 1987), vol. 12, p. 549, are apt here: "Theologians usually distinguish four intentions of sacrifice: praise (acknowledgement, homage), thanksgiving, supplication and expiation; but several or even all four of these intentions may be combined in a single sacrifice." Cf. J. van Baal, "Offering, Sacrifice and Gift", *Numen* 23, 1973, 161-178, for an attempt to clarify the meaning of the three terms: "...I do object against the use of the term sacrifice for rituals in which every element of the gift or atonement is utterly absent. Giving is important, far more important than our theories thus far have been willing to recognise, erroneously substituting bribing for giving" (p. 177). A good example of a Theophrastean attempt to reduce complex human motivation to a neat semantic schema!

¹¹⁸ See W. Burkert, "Glaube und Verhalten: Zeichengehalt und Wirkungsmacht von Opferritualen", in *Le sacrifice dans l'antiquité*, p. 112.

¹¹⁹ For bloodless sacrifice in ancient Greece and contemporary Africa, see F.T. van Straten, "Gifts for the Gods", in *Faith, Hope and Worship*, pp. 85 ff.; J.S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, pp. 58-61. Theophrastus' views on bloodless sacrifice which he believes pre-dated blood sacrifice, the product of times of famine, are particularly interesting here (*Pere euseb.* fr. 2, 3, 6 Pötscher). See P.A. Meijer, "Philosophers, Intellectuals and Religion in Hellas", in *Faith, Hope and Worship*, pp. 250 ff. Theophrastus' theory of the evolution of blood sacrifice raises the important question of "gathering". See J.Z. Smith, "The Domestication of Sacrifice", in *Violent Origins*, p. 204: "I join in the consensus that there never was, and certainly is not now, a stage of pure hunting. Hunting is always in combination with gathering, with plant products making up the bulk of the diet (except in unusual cases, such as that of the Eskimos)". Burkert's theory may well overrate the importance of the hunt to the whole community in Palaeolithic times, especially if women were the chief gatherers and thus the main providers of food for the community. See M. Ehrenberg, *Women in Pre-History* (London: British Museum, 1989), pp. 50-62, "It is estimated that plant foods make up 60-80 per cent of the diet by weight of the !Kung (sc. of the Kalahari) and virtually all of this is supplied by the women, who gather enough food to feed themselves, their young children and aged relatives, and also husbands, if the men return to the camp after an unsuccessful day" (sc. hunting) (p. 52).

¹²⁰ See *Anthropologie des religiösen Opfers*, p. 29: “Die Entwicklung von der Jagd zu Jagdritualen, von Jägerritualen zu Opferritualen in der Prähistorie muß weithin Spekulation bleiben; auf Dokumentation ist nicht zu hoffen.”

¹²¹ At least Burkert’s hypothesis lends itself to this process which is more than can be said for the theory (“generative scapegoating”) of René Girard, a theory gleaned from literature and based on a fictional original event, an act of collective violence arising out of mimetic desire. See *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Univ. Press, 1977) and his later views in *Violent Origins*, pp. 73-105. For Burkert’s criticisms of Girard’s thesis, see *Violent Origins* pp. 171 ff. and “Glaube und Verhalten”, in *Le sacrifice dans l’antiquité*, p. 110: “Girard konstruiert eine Ursituation, in der die intraspezifische Aggression der Menschen, imitativ aufgestachelt, sich in einer Explosion entlädt, in der Vernichtung, ja Zerreissung eines willkürlich gewählten ‘Opfers’; dies ist die Katharsis, die dann den Frieden ermöglicht. Die Berufung auf Tragödie und Tragödientheorie ist explizit. Was m.E. fehlt, ist der historisch-empirische Unterbau.” (For similar criticism, cf. *Anthropologie des religiösen Opfers*, p. 21.) However, Girard and Burkert do have much in common: *Homo Necans* and *La violence et le sacré* were first published, independently of each other, in 1972, and are arguably products of post-Vietnam attempts to explore the nature of human aggression, and the apparent paradox of the existence of violence at the centre of the sacred. Both works attempt to offer general theories of sacrifice which both scholars regard as fundamentally important for the shaping and survival of human communities, in which peace is dangerously fragile.

¹²² See J.Z. Smith, “The Domestication of Sacrifice”, in *Violent Origins*, p. 195: “One cannot single out a highly condensed or dramatic moment from the total ritual ensemble as if this, in some sense, was the “essence” of the ritual. These considerations underscore the position that a theory of sacrifice...cannot be found in a quest for origins, but can only be found through the detailed examination of elaborations.” Cf. p. 207: “There is no primordium; it’s all application. Everything is elaboration. So, I refuse questions of origins.”

¹²³ See, in particular, M. Detienne, “Entre Bêtes et Dieux”, *Nouvelle Revue de Psychoanalyse* 6, 1972, 231-246; R.L. Gordon (ed.), *Myth, religion and society* (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 43-93; M. Detienne and J.-P. Vernant (eds.), *The Cuisine of Sacrifice among the Greeks*; J.-L. Durand and A. Schnapp, “Sacrificial Slaughter and Initiatory Hunt”, in *A City of Images*, pp. 53-70.

¹²⁴ Or, to use the words of J.-L. Durand, “This movement back and forth from one logic to another has the potential for illuminating levels of meaning by the discovery of that which differentiates—and equalizes—human societies”. (“Greek animals: Toward a Topology of Edible Bodies”, in *The Cuisine of Sacrifice among the Greeks*, p. 88).

¹²⁵ I owe this reference to S.C. Humphreys, *Anthropology and the Greeks*, p. 17.

¹²⁶ *Homo Necans*, p. 297.

REPORT ON THE CONFERENCE "THE STUDY OF
RELIGIONS IN AFRICA", THE UNIVERSITY OF
ZIMBABWE, HARARE, SEPTEMBER 15-19, 1992

JACOB K. OLUPONA AND ROSALIND I.J. HACKETT

The first African Regional Conference sponsored by the International Association for the History of Religions was held at the University of Zimbabwe, Harare, from September 15 to 19, 1992, and focused on the Study of Religions in Africa. The Conference was planned almost two years ago by a sub-committee appointed by the IAHR during its International Congress in Rome in 1990. The African conference was organized by Dr. Jan Platvoet of the University of Leiden, The Netherlands, and Dr. J.L. Cox of the University of Zimbabwe, Harare, and held under the auspices of the Department of Religious Studies, Classics, and Philosophy, University of Zimbabwe, Harare. It was attended by scholars from Nigeria, South Africa, Namibia, Kenya, Zimbabwe, U.S.A., Germany, The Netherlands, Sweden, England, and Swaziland. The opening session which set the stage for this conference was chaired by Prof. R. Abubakre of the University of Ilorin, currently President of the Nigerian Association for the Study of Religion and a member of the IAHR Executive. Welcoming addresses were read by Professor G.L. Chavunduka, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Zimbabwe; Dr. Ephraim Mandivenga, Chairman of the Department of Religious Studies, University of Zimbabwe; and Prof. J.S. Kruger, President of the Association for the Study of Religion in Southern Africa.

In the evening, Prof. Michael Pye, the IAHR Secretary General gave a paper on "International Strategies and the International Association for the History of Religions: A Policy Statement." Given the increasing regional diversification and intercultural extension of the work of the IAHR, he emphasized the neutrality of the organization and its need to maintain "methodological independence from specific religious standpoints." Studying religion as a social, cultural and historical phenomenon within an

intercultural forum, Professor Pye argued, will and should serve to question (Western) assumptions about concepts and fields of investigation, as well as generate reflection upon the influence of political and indigenous forces on the study of religion.

All of the conference papers were presented by invited scholars of religion in African and they fell into three broad categories (though some overlapped). The first set of papers focused on the regional surveys of the academic study of religion in West, East and Southern Africa: Dr. Jacob Olupona, “The Academic Study of Religion in West Africa: Past, Present, and Future,” Dr. Teresia M. Hinga, “The Academic Study of Religion in Kenya: Historical Roots, Contemporary Issues and Future Prospects,” and Prof. Martin Prozesky on “South Africa’s Contribution to Religious Studies”. These three papers were mainly on Africa’s scholarship within the field of Religious Studies focusing on the historical, social, and cultural issues that influenced and shaped the study of religion in Africa’s regions. They drew attention to the achievements of African scholars, particularly in the area of the study of African traditional religions, while addressing the varying relationship with theology and church-related institutions.

Another cluster of papers dealt with problems of theory and method in the study of religion in Africa. They were as follows, Michael Bourdillon, “Anthropological Approaches to the Study of African Religions,” James Cox, “Methodological Consideration Relevant to the Truth of African Traditional Religions: a Phenomenological Perspective,” Friday Mbon, “Some Methodological Issues in the Academic Study of West African Traditional Religions,” and Ambrose Moyo, “The Role of Theological Education within the Context of Religious Studies: Zimbabwe as a Case Study.” The above papers focused on the debate and crisis in methodology in Religious Studies in general. As it is often the case in conferences on problems of methodology, these papers demonstrated the merits and weaknesses of using different approaches, especially when applied to African data. The relationship between theological education and the history of religions provoked serious discussion.

A third set of papers focused on various religious traditions in Africa, (Islam, Christianity, indigenous Hinduism and Judaism),

and their study and interaction with African cultural and social life. Anil Sooklal, "The Hindu Diaspora: Challenge of the South African Context," Jocelyn Hellig, "Judaism in the New South Africa," R. Abubakre, "The Position of the Academic and Non-Academic Study of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa—Nigeria as a Case Study," Salman Nadvi, "The Academic Study of Islam in Southern Africa," Abdulkader Tayob, "The Muslim Youth Movement (MYM) of South Africa: Challenginge the Ulama Hegemony," Tambona Shoko, "Determining the Core Concern of the Karanga: A Methodological Study," and Frans Verstraelen, "Doing Christian History and Thought in an African Context: Methodological Considerations and Applications." This last set of papers, like the previous ones, raised many questions that we are unable to discuss here. In general, they provoked interesting discussions on the status of the various traditions in government-controlled universities, and the impact of the changing face of each tradition on the academic study of religion.

The structure of the conference included respondents from Europe and the United States, all who had either had long associations with African scholarship or the religious traditions to which they were asked to respond. The discussions that followed each paper were both stimulating and rigorous. A high point of the conference was a trip to see the rock painting at Ngoma Kurira.

At the closing session of the conference, participants voted unanimously to form an "African Association for the Study of Religions." A working committee was elected to take charge of the association. In the coming year, the AASR will embark upon several important projects among which are: a biannual newsletter, Directory of Scholars of African Religions, a drive to solve Africa's book famine, and the establishment of national associations for the study of religions. The Association will request full membership of the International Association for the History of Religions in Mexico City in 1995.

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PROGRAMMATIC STATEMENTS FROM AFRICA, 1982-1992

JAN G. PLATVOET

Review article

The scope of this article

The academic study of religions in Anglophone Africa is a product of the decolonization process. The adoption of secular constitutions by the new nations demanded that their universities also be secular. Departments of Divinity or Theology that had been established at the end of the colonial era, reflecting the quasi-established position of the Christian mainline churches in British colonies and dominions in Africa, were converted into Departments of Religious Studies after independence. They were usually placed in Faculties of Arts¹ and enjoined to pay equal and neutral attention to the religions of their nations. Though Christian theology thus lost its monopoly, these departments continued to serve mainly the needs of the Christian mainline churches. Their transformation into secular institutes of learning has not yet been completed.²

The programmatic statements discussed in this article reflect that situation. They are statements on the methodology of the study of religions by scholars posted in universities in Anglophone Africa in the period 1982-1992. They must not be taken as representative of all methodological thought in Anglophone Africa in that decade. The space of this article allows the discussion of only a few of them. Nor is my collection of them complete. The very weak currencies of most African nations prevent the integration of their book publishing trades into the global book market. As a result, it often proves impossible to obtain books from them. The ones I possess were often acquired on visits. I discuss three in some detail, in chronological order, and mention the seven others that might also have been reviewed. The three which I discuss have been selected partly because of the strategic positions their authors hold in the study of religions in Africa. I conclude with remarks on the book famine in Africa.

1982: Krüger's fundamental science of religion

J.S. KRÜGER, *Studying religion: a methodological introduction to science of religion*. Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1982¹, 1988², xi + 82 pp., 1 diagram, bibliography, ISBN 0-86981-276-X, hard cover, no price stated.

Jacobus Krüger (1940) is Professor of science of religion and Head of the Department of Religious Studies in the Faculty of Theology of the University of South Africa (UNISA) at Pretoria.³ He has a Barthian background: he obtained his PhD in 1972 with a thesis on the ethics of Karl Barth. That field caused him to move into sociology of religion and the study of religions. In 1979, he exchanged his lectureship in systematic theology for one in the science of religion in the Department of Missiology.⁴ His triple background, in theology, sociology, and the study of religions, is apparent in this introduction to the methodology of the study of religion, in the literature cited, in the way the argument is developed, and in the positions taken. Other influences are philosophy of science and sociology of knowledge. Krüger has also published on Buddhism (1988a, 1988b, 1990) and is engaged in research on the religions of the San nomadic food gathering societies of Southern Africa. He is currently President of the Association for the Study of Religion in Southern Africa.⁵

Krüger terms this booklet a 'fundamental science of religion' (24).⁶ Its task is to reveal 'the deep lying principles operative in religion and in the scientific study of religion' (24) in order to assist the student to become 'self-consciously and self-critically aware' (3) how he may acquire reliable knowledge about the religions of humankind. That must lay the groundwork in the student for the more specialized equipment which the student will need in the study of specific religions or themes. The book has a preface and seven chapters.

The second chapter (5-10) discusses by means of a diagram how scientific knowledge is acquired, distinguishes science of religion from theology, and presents a first outline of science of religion. Theology, taken in a narrow sense, is defined as the committed exposition, from the point of a particular faith, of transcendent reality (7). Science of religion has a different scope and level: it describes, understands and explains all religious phenomena as a human phenomenon (7, 8, 10). Krüger, however, adds that, 'taken in a wider sense, theology could partly coincide with science of religion'—though he does not specify what 'theology in a wider sense' is, nor what part of science of religion would coincide with that theology. It must be pointed out that here, and throughout the book,⁷ Krüger speaks of 'transcendent reality' without qualifying it as a religious postulate. By doing so, he exceeds the limits of empirical falsification. I suggest that this is the sense in which his science of religion does indeed partly coincide with 'theology taken in a wider sense'. This religionism⁸ of Krüger explains why he, in contrast to the usually 'eirenic-ironic' (55) spirit of his book, raises the usual battle cries against what religionists perceive as the deadly foe of religion and the study of religion: logical

empiricism. In chapter three, on metascientific positions (11-23), Krüger accuses it of virulent anthropological reductionism, methodological, ontological and epistemological monism, an antireligious bias and inadequate methodology (12).⁹ Only after this exorcism are its contributions to scientific methodology acknowledged (12-13, 58-60). Some may be tempted to dismiss Krüger's contributions to the methodology of the study of religions on these counts. In my view, they would be ill-advised to do so, for Krüger has important insights to offer also to those who pursue non-religionist modes of the study of religions.

Popper's critical rationalism is discussed in a calmer mood (13-14). It is praised for leaving 'open the possibility that religious faith may be meaningful and true' (14), and for opposing 'closed, dogmatic, absolutist, authoritarian thinking'¹⁰ (14). Critical theory, as presented by Habermas (15-16), is praised for not endorsing 'the spurious positivistic split between science and life' (16) and for attacking 'the ideological justification of the technocratic society' which positivistic science has in fact become. Krüger's heart is, however, with phenomenology (16-20) and the hermeneutical school (20-23). Phenomenology establishes that 'the true humanity of man is his subjectivity' (17). Its intentionality must be disciplined to direct itself '“to the things themselves”' as they appear in human consciousness (18). By inducing an 'attitude of disciplined wonder', it may act as 'a proto-science, a discipline of the mind coming before science' and as 'a framework for the sciences themselves' by which 'the irrelevance of positivistic science' is overcome (17). Krüger distinguishes between phenomenology as the method developed by Husserl, and its use by phenomenologists of religion for systematizing and classifying religious phenomena. He deplores that it was developed into an independent sub-discipline in science of religion and gradually lost contact with its origin (19, 57). He thinks that 'maintaining contact with its philosophical origin should re-invigorate the method' (19) and detects, to my mind incorrectly, signs of that in the publications of Pye, Smart, Allen and Waardenburg. Having referred briefly to phenomenology as a school in sociology of religion and its promises, he characteristically concludes that 'science of religion should not select phenomenology or any other approach as the be-all and end-all of philosophy and methodology' (20). It must, in Krüger's view, also incorporate elements from the hermeneutics developed by Hegel, Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Gadamer and Ricoeur, which teaches us to 'respect the dignity of whatever I am trying to understand, and to allow it to speak for itself' (21), and also that understanding is a circular process, in which the object must constantly correct the understanding by the subject. Hermeneutics 'rules out

uncritical dogmatism' (22). It enters into 'a passionate, though critical, relation with the truth value of each symbol' which it does not dissolve. He quotes Wach (1975: 127): 'The sense of the numinous is not extinguished by it, but on the contrary, is awakened, strengthened, shaped and enriched by it' (22). Hermeneutics, which is 'furthest removed from positivism' (23), is in his eyes, the methodology of science of religion.

In chapter four, on 'the roots of religio-scientific inquiry' (24-35), Krüger weaves these strands into his fundamental science of religion. He stresses that though man is determined by his natural and socio-cultural environment, he should not be seen as 'nothing but the product of objective forces' and thus 'become completely depersonalized' (27). That would turn a methodological perspective into a totalitarian world view, as one finds in dogmatism, traditionalism, sociologism, positivism, determinism, etc. (27-28). Man should be seen as also acting upon, in, and via, the world, and as encountering the 'awesome dimension of religious reality' (30) through symbols by which he expresses religious meanings and which impress meaning upon him (30-31). He pleads for an 'action perspective' (33) in the analysis of religion and for 'responsive explanation' that analyses religion as response to the world and to religious reality (32). He also tries to defuse the traditional dichotomy between understanding and explanation by suggesting that understanding be understood to mean satisfactory knowledge and explanation as any help towards achieving it (34-35).

The heart, and best part, is chapter 5, on 'self-awareness' (36-46): how objectivity, or sound knowledge, may be achieved in the heart of subjectivity by keeping ideas tentative and testing them for greater intra- and inter-subjective validity. By analyzing the forces operating on these processes, such as the general cultural background, the religious milieu, the ethos of the scientific community, its extra-scientific interests and ideologies, and the student's personal religion (37-43) the student will achieve *reflexiveness*: the ability of 'the investigator [to] investigate himself as investigator' (44). It is 'the scientific habit rigorously at work' (46). It enables the student to be 'self-critically aware of any hidden cargo' (65), clear distortions in himself, allow the culture or religion of the other(s) to show themselves as they are (45), and achieve 'adequacy' in their description. That 'adequacy' is explored in chapter 6: 'on the social dimension of adequacy' (47-55). It demands that the viewpoints of those whose religion is being described should serve as a primary, but not as the sole canon of the validity of a description (47-48, 53-57, 65). Krüger explains this by distinguishing between pretheoretical and theoretical under-

standing, and in the former between existential, participant or insider, and outsider understanding. Pretheoretical understanding is usually unproblematic and naive, asking for no explanation, but may occasionally become reflective and seek explanations. Theoretical explanation is both reflective—the student seeks to arrive at understanding by explanation—and reflexive: the student investigates himself (49). It is disciplined, systematic, systematically constructed, and public (50-51). It relies implicitly on some sort of participant or existential understanding: ‘truth is found via dialogue’ (53). But the cooperation of believers must be critically evaluated as ‘there is much more to a religion than meets the eye of the believers’ (53). Theoretical understanding should also conform to, and be controlled by, the standards of the forum of expert opinion (54). It should, however, not be answerable only to fellow scholars, but also to society at large. It is the product of pluralistic society and must play its irenic-ironic role in it with unsentimental humaneness in a responsible way (54-55).

The last chapter is devoted to ‘the concept of religion’ (56-77). Krüger may be placed in the tradition that defines religion by its function of orientation¹¹: ‘religion is essentially a response to ultimate meaning’ (43). It is not, however, his aim to offer a theory, or definition, of ‘religion’ (IX, 56) but to explore what type of concept of religion we need, to what uses it has been put, and to investigate ‘the field of dimensions underlying possible and existing definitions [of religion]’ (56). The concept should be precise and reliable, reflect the understanding of the religious actors, and never be final (57, 59). It may be used as a theoretical, or constructed, concept, or as a classificatory one with e.g. typological functions, or for dimensional clarification (60-63). For extra-scientific reasons, it is often specified either substantively or functionally, which greatly changes the scope of the concept (63-65).

In their stead, Krüger prefers a broad view of religion through dimensional clarification (65-77). In tune with his religionist position, he distinguishes two clusters of dimensions, the objective and the subjective ones; or, that to which man responds, and the way he responds. In the first, the transcendent religious reality is central; it is complemented by man’s need for a cosmology, for salvation, and for a source of salvation (66-71). The second has two dimensions; man’s ambivalence to the sacred; and human religious experience, or faith, as a total response, which Krüger breaks down into religious feeling, willing, knowing, doing, and speaking (72-77).

Krüger is scholastic and delights in distinctions. He is an irenic bridge builder between closed and more open positions by his honest praxis of

reflexiveness. It enables him to take criticism of positions he holds dear seriously. His eclecticism allows him to integrate elements from diverse strands of theory without becoming partisan to any (IX, 10, 23, 44-46, 58, 64). He has certainly also not been eclectic enough yet. One important voice is completely absent from his choir: anthropology of religion.¹² In matters of methodology and theory development, that one voice is quite a forceful, complex and often strident choir by itself.¹³ I trust that his study of San religion will have brought that voice to his attention. It would be exciting to have a revised version of this book that incorporates the results of that encounter. It should also be an expanded version as he touches on many matters in this edition without properly explaining them. That allows him to pass over certain contradictions too lightly or opt out of an unwelcome difficulty too easily. All in all, however, this version is, for all its brevity, a remarkable contribution to the ongoing methodological debate.¹⁴

1984: Prozesky's explanation of religions as contingent experiments in euonic drive

M.H. PROZESKY, *Religion and ultimate well-being: an explanatory theory*. London: Macmillan, 1984, X + 256 pp., bibliography, index, ISBN 0-333-32498-6, hard cover, no price stated (= Library of Philosophy and Religion, 20).

Martin Prozesky (1944) is Professor of Religious Studies and Head of the Department of Philosophy & Religious Studies in the University of Natal at Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. After undergraduate studies at Rhodes University, at Grahamstown and at Trinity College, Oxford, and graduate studies at the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge (Mass.) and Harvard Divinity School between 1965 and 1973, he obtained his D.Phil at the University of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in 1977. He taught systematic theology at Rhodes University in 1969, and Comparative Religion in the University of Rhodesia from 1971 to 1976. He has taught at Pietermaritzburg since 1977, specializing in concepts of human nature, explanation theory, and Friedrich Schleiermacher in philosophy of religion; and, in the study of religions, in religion in South Africa.¹⁵ He detached Religious Studies from the Department of Divinity and joined it to that of Philosophy. He is foundation member of the Association for the Study of Religions in Southern Africa (ASRSA) and a member of its executive since 1979. He is also the founder of its journal, which he edited till 1992.

Prozesky's book is an exercise in religious and philosophical anthropology (12, 102). It seeks to explain, after the rules set for explana-

tion by modern philosophy of science (68-98), religion, and mankind's religious history, from a constitutive mark in man, his finitude (140-142). This predicament forces man to engage constantly in a creative drive to maximise well-being (92, 228). However, Prozesky not only aims to explain past religious history as a man-made historical sequence of more or less successful euonic experiments; he also sees modern secularity (213) as its graveyard (224). The long age of transcendentalism (151, 154, 189) is drawing to a close (212-217, 224). To forestall 'the triumph of materialistic naturalism' (236), Prozesky calls for a 'radical religious renewal' (224) that relativises all belief, actions, and ritual, but not faith. Prozesky finds the basis for it in insights formulated by the young Schleiermacher (176, 225). It is this Schleiermachian inspiration which turns his book into an exercise in philosophical theology and invalidates it, in my view, as an empirical explanation of religion, as I will more fully show below.

The book has five, mostly very long chapters. In the first chapter (1-14), Prozesky sets out seven shortcomings in existing views of religion. They fail to notice the provisional nature of human knowledge and of worldviews; they are conceptually parochial and produce distorted information on other religions; they fail to emphasize salvation as the central notion in religion; they also fail to explain religion, and its rejection; and the theories of 'authoritative sceptics' (6) are guilty of 'subjective reductionism, the doctrine that religion involves no more than human factors' (6-7, 92-93). The main reason for these shortcomings is insufficient attention to problems of method. They can now be remedied because Hick, Smart and Cantwell Smith paid proper attention to methodology; because historical scholarship drew a comprehensive picture of the religions of mankind; and because philosophers have specified what would constitute adequate explanation (6-8). These strides forward set the scene for Prozesky's enterprise to explain religion in terms of man's 'basic drive to find the greatest possible well-being' (10) by the identification of its causes and by showing that religion is 'their natural and logical effect'. Prozesky terms the method he uses 'experiential, phenomenological and philosophical' (12).

In chapter two (14-67), religion is explored in its global perspective with the help of the experiential and phenomenological method. Its 'eight defining characteristics' (18) are set out. The first one is the benefit which believers experience from it. Having referred to evidence in William James' *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902) and in publications by Sir Alister Hardy (19-21), he adduces further proof for it from the scriptures of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism, the Hindu religious

tradition, Buddhism, and the religions of China. He concludes that ‘a pervasive concern for well-being’ (45) is found in religions of all times and places of which we have reliable information. ‘Well-being’ is the condition characterized by happiness, health or prosperity, which some religions, and some scholars, term ‘salvation’ (49). Three more marks are that ‘religious life everywhere involves experience of certain highly significant forces which believers regard as directly responsible for the benefits they so assiduously seek’ (54); transcendence: these forces ‘manifest or give access to a superior but imperceptible order of reality’ (54),¹⁶ which ‘people sense as something profoundly real’ (58); and as a demand ‘to be wholly engaged’ (58) with it. The four last traits are the plurality of religions (59-62), their being conditioned by their contexts (62-64), the special role played by the founders of the axial faiths (64-65), and the secular challenge to modern religion (65-66).

In chapter three (68-98), Prozesky first surveys central issues in the philosophy of explanation as they apply to the humanities, the social sciences and the study of religions (69-82). Then the essentials of explanation are set out (82-91) and a strategy for explaining religion is devised (91-96). ‘Explanation’ is here an argument showing ‘why a phenomenon exists or works in a particular way’ (69) by a deductive-nomological (DN), or covering law, approach. In that approach, a problem is explained if the solution to the problem can be logically deduced from one or more laws of nature and from statements specifying the original conditions of the problem (70). This approach is based upon a world-view that sees the universe as ‘an orderly aggregate functioning according to regular, uniform processes which can be discovered through observation and formulated very accurately as testable laws of nature’ (72). Though many authors disagree that the DN-approach can be applied to human behaviour, Prozesky holds that teleological, or goal-referring, explanation of human behaviour is logically compatible with a law-covering one if ‘people’s actions reveal uniformities that could be stated as testable generalizations’ (77). Religion is such an area because it universally satisfies the need of humans for well-being (81-82). Following Popper, Prozesky stipulates four requirements for its adequate explanation: it must be testable, and not known be false; it must also be independently testable, or non-circular, and use laws of nature (87). Also following Popper, Prozesky stresses the tentative nature of explanatory theories: they are developed by conjecture and refutation. They are nets, of ever finer mesh, ‘cast to catch “the world” ’ (90).

Against theories that explain religion either naturalistically or religiously, Prozesky proposes to explain it, in ‘an open-ended empirical

attempt' (97), from two globally constant characteristics: the desire for well-being, and the powers operating in a largely unseen, transcendent realm to which believers look for its satisfaction (94), and from a number of originating conditions. The first are explored in chapter four (99-152), the second in chapter five (153-236).

Prozesky terms the two marks of human existence the cosmological and the anthropological factors. The cosmological one is constituted by 'reality at large' (100, 101) which he defines as whatever 'affects us beyond sight and hearing' (100-101). It is this complex and confusing concept¹⁷ which is the crux of Prozesky's fusion, and in my view confusion, of empirical methodology with transemperical religionism. It comprises not only aspects of testable reality, physical, such as germs and gravity (101), and historical, such as 'the good will or ill will of others' (101), or beliefs in gods, or theories explaining religion, but also elements of non-testable 'reality', such as 'the powers known to believers as spirits' (101), and elements which might belong to either, such as 'the causes of tragedy and death'. The inspirator of this (con)fusion is Schleiermacher's early concept of religion as *Gefühl und Geschmack fürs Unendliche* ('feeling and taste for the infinite'). Schleiermacher, assuming that 'all perception involves an influence by the perceived on the perceiver',¹⁸ made the metaphysical part of perceptible reality. By doing likewise,¹⁹ Prozesky converts the two into a combined 'reality' to which the methodology of explanation developed by Popper and others in modern philosophy of explanation cannot be applied because it contains an untestable part—which moreover cannot be identified. Prozesky's proposal therefore conflicts with the first of Popper's requirements. As it cannot be known to be true or false, it can neither, in my view, comply with the second of his conditions.²⁰

The rest of chapter four (102-152) explores the anthropological factor: the natural and universal euonic drive in man which is directed by his affective sense (100, 104, 113-117) and derives support from his cognitive faculty for theory building. In the face of the mysterious and unknown, man used these for developing all-embracing megatheories, in particular the religious cosmologies of the transcendentalist age from the familiar. Though they are 'products of finite human ingenuity' (125), they easily establish themselves in human thought as reliable, hide their human origin, and acquire immense covert power over human minds (126) as they transcend empirical proof and disproof (129). Even so, they are not immune to paradigm shifts and quantum leaps, as man's religious history shows (127). Under the influence of regional and other contextual factors (142-146) human religions diversify as they do through the variety of

human cultures, histories and the occasional great religious luminary. As a result, ‘change rather than durability [is] the norm’ in human religious history (149).

That history is the subject of chapter five (153-236). It aims to shows ‘the initial conditions or activating circumstances in which the spiritual life emerges and develops historically’ (153) and by doing so to satisfy all conditions for a proper explanation of religion. By presenting these, Prozesky intends not only to explain the origin of religion, and its history, but also why unbelief arose, and what quantum leap religion now should take in order that we may continue to experience ‘the promptings of a mysterious cosmic context’ (234) in this age of secularity in which we perforce must be metaphysical agnostics (227).

Prozesky explains the origin of religion from ‘a groping of the mind in the dawn of rational consciousness’ (156) by which it discovered that true and total satisfaction is beyond its limits and abilities, and from the then ‘natural conclusion’, on the basis of ‘causal awareness’, that man may have recourse for it to ‘a multi-personal cosmos’ (160). This ‘spirit-hypothesis’ was fertile because the forces of the unseen cosmos were conceived by analogy to human beings, which implied that they were controlled and amenable to discovery (163).

Thus the long age of transcendentalism began. Prozesky divides it in three major stages, each brought on by a new ‘activating circumstance’: (1) mythological naturalism—which he subdivides into animism, polytheism, and incipient monotheism (164-184)—; (2) the other-world hypothesis—which he subdivides into spiritual monism and universalist monotheism and in which he stresses the role of the ‘great luminaries’ who founded the ‘axial faiths’ that have dominated the last two millennia of the transcendentalist age (184-210)—; and (3) the present age of secularity that may become the ‘twilight of the spiritual age’ (235) and see the triumph of materialistic naturalism (210-228).

Of the first phase, I only need to remark that he uses ‘animism’ not in the sense Tylor gave to it, but in that of popularizers and journalists which has denigrating connotations of being spirit-ridden, primitive and superstitious; and, in line with that low opinion of them, that he considers all mythological naturalism ‘obsolete’ (217, 231) and doomed to disappear, because ‘spirit-causation has been completely displaced by science’ (184, 211-212, 214-217, 231). Of the second, that it sprung, in the theory of Prozesky, from ‘a radical critique of spatio-temporality’: imperishable well-being cannot be achieved in this life but is deemed possible and sought in an here-after (184-187, 230). This quantum leap in religious history transformed religion as naturalistic explanation into religions of

supernatural salvation. As is shown by the many adherents they gained, their euonic success far exceeded that of mythological naturalism (186). Prozesky is correct in dating this quantum leap from the times of Moses to those of Muhammad, and to connect its emergence to the technological and economic developments in certain societies (195-200). But I question whether Moses should be included among his 'great luminaries': he seems to have mainly served the function of legitimating developments that took place several centuries later. I also suggest that the exceptional role which Prozesky attributes to the other luminaries rests for the greater part on the mythology created for them by their followers, who thereby legitimated and secured achievements of a collective nature.

In respect of the third phase I may remark that Prozesky is correct to suggest that the technological and other developments of the last two centuries are propelling human religious history into a second quantum leap that will more radically transform it than the first one. It is, however, a great pity that Prozesky's analysis of this phase is not that of a detached scholar but of an engaged reformer. It causes him not to observe its traits from the position of a neutral outsider, but to wage war on two fronts. He conducts a minor war against 'flint-souled' (162) materialists, accusing them of 'subjective reductionism: the doctrine that religion involves no more than human factors', such as 'illusion born of fear, ignorance, oppression or whatever' (6, 92-93, 145); and of dogmatism: they absolutize the view that there is no other reality than the present one (213). They condemn us to the 'materialistic naturalism' (236) of 'the brute facts' (235).

His major battle is, however, against the 'religious theories' (93) of 'super-naturalist' (96) believers, particularly the 'dogmatic religionists' (213) whom he also calls 'transcendentalist zealots' (218, 227). Religious theories fail to account for the plurality of religions and for unbelief. They explain religion 'as justified fidelity to the evocations of an objectively real, transcendent world of spirit, accurately perceived by the eye of faith' (93). To invoke spiritual causes is circular; one cannot, moreover, establish which spiritual cause must be invoked (96-97). Mana and the numinous are 'natural forms of cosmic awareness' and can be perfectly explained without the postulation of an independent reality and a special religious sense to perceive it (157). Prozesky objects strongly to the conclusion that his refusal to explain religion by means of revelations from a realm above the perceptible one would amount to 'another piece of subjective reductionism' (190, 209). That is not so, for 'the experienced effects of objectively real but mysterious cosmic forces' (190) are asserted. Divine

self-revelations cannot be ruled out, but cannot be used to explain religion as they cannot be falsified. Moreover, they need not be used, as mankind's religious history can be fully explained without them: 'theistic belief [...] arose naturally as a direct consequence of the impact on our affective sense of a largely unseen, forceful cosmos' (191, 209). The belief in revelations also involves several other severe logical difficulties (192-1195). Prozesky, however, admits that 'theistic traditionalists' (222) have several defense mechanisms against the new age, such as compartmentalising faith and reason, paradoxalizing the new knowledge in order to save traditional dogma, exploiting the grave ethical problems of modern existence, and demonizing it (215-220). As a result, 'there is every likelihood that traditional theistic religion will continue to thrive', but at the cost of alienation from modern developments (220). He is more sceptical of the changes of survival of the liberal theists who pursue several adaptive strategies (220-224). These will, he predicts, 'ultimately prove frustrating and transient' (224). The one option left is 'the new version of faith [...] that works with rather than against the modern views of knowledge with its relativity, critical attitudes, creativity, openness to new data and radical uncertainty about answering ultimate questions' that conceives 'of the divine as an inherent force in the universe' (225).

In conclusion two more difficulties may be listed apart from the crucial problem set out above about the extent of testable and empirically explainable 'reality'. One is that Prozesky's theory explains every phase and aspect of human religious history so neatly and completely—its origin and development, all the diverse sorts of religions that emerged or will emerge, belief and unbelief—that it comes close to explaining nothing (see his own remark on 168). His explanation is as all-embracing as a world-view and has all the self-confirmatory properties of it. That is in line with his Schleiermachian drive towards new religious radicalism. That drive causes him to take the position of an engaged participant in religious history instead of that of a non-committed outsider. It prohibits him from surveying present day religious transformation in a comprehensive and neutral way. My other reservation respects the traditional tripartite structure of human religious history presented by Prozesky. It seems tailored to suit the needs, the limits, and the reconstructive intents of Prozesky's theory. Present insights seem to require a more complex account of its overall development. Even so, there is much to admire in this book: his forceful style, the clarity of his presentation, and his audacity to develop an all-encompassing, revolutionary argument. I am amazed that it has not created a great stir.²¹

1991: *Olupona's civil religion: the king as the patron of all religions*

J.K. OLUPONA, *Kingship, religion, and rituals in a Nigerian community: a phenomenological study of Ondo-Yoruba festivals*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1991, 194 pp., 2 maps, ills., 1 appendix, bibliography, index, ISBN 91-22-03182-2, paper cover (= Stockholm studies in comparative religion, 28).

Jacob Kehinde Olupona (1951) is Associate Professor in the Afro-American and Black Studies Program of the University of California, Davis, now. He was born in Ute, in Ondo State, Nigeria. He obtained a BA in Religious Studies from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and an MA and, in 1983, a PhD in Comparative Religion at Boston University with a thesis on the interaction of traditional religion, Islam and Christianity among the Ondo-Yoruba. Among this large, but little studied subgroup of the 40 million strong cluster of Yoruba peoples of South-West Nigeria he did fieldwork, for his PhD and this book, between 1979 and 1986. He was a senior lecturer in the Department of Religious Studies at the Obafemi Awolowo University, at Ilé-Ifé, Nigeria, from 1983 to 1989. He was then appointed, first to Amherst College in Maine, USA, and then to the University of California, Davis. He has held fellowships and visiting professorships at Amherst College, Selley Oaks College, Muhlenberg College, Bayreuth University and at Smith College. His research is on religion and politics in Nigeria (see Olupona & Falola 1991), the study of religions in Africa,²² Yoruba religion in American urban cities, and on African churches and religious movements in the USA. He is the coordinator of the steering committee of the African Association for the Study of Religions (AfASR), a continent-wide association for scholars of religions in Africa and a global one for scholars in the religions of Africa that was founded at the first IAHR regional conference in Africa in Harare, Zimbabwe, in 1992. AfASR has applied for affiliation to the IAHR.

Olupona's book is on the cementing role of kingship rituals in present day Ondo. It proves Prozesky's prediction premature. The core of the book is set out neatly in the invitation which a chief addresses to the people of Ondo on behalf of the *oba* (ruler) every year on a day in July: 'Silence, silence, silence. The king greets you all. He says, when the Christians had their festival, he celebrated with them. When the Muslims had theirs, he joined them in celebrating it. When the *orisa* believers [of the traditional Ondo-Yoruba religion] had theirs, he joined them [also]. *Ajailaye* [praise name of the ruler] says that his festival is in nine days time. Let the person on the farm come home. Let every person celebrate with

him' (74). The traditional religions of Africa prove versatile. Their deeply ingrained traditions of adoption and adaptation enable them to share a society even with intolerant immigrant faiths, cede certain spheres to them, detect new opportunities and develop there in quite a vigorous way.

The modern focus of Ondo religion on kingship is the product of colonial time. Restored and bolstered by the British (31-33), the *oba* became the potent symbol of Ondo identity, unifying the Ondo people in a period of fast transformations and strong centrifugal forces. In this cult, Ondo traditional religion developed functions equivalent to those of the 'civil religion' discovered by Bellah for the USA with its strict separation of religion and state. Olupona describes its historical and socio-structural setting and its genesis in chapters I and II, highlighting the strains, political and other, which underlie the modern balance of power. They are those between aboriginal groups and the Ondo invaders; between patrilineages and the quarters as the bases of the military organisation; between the five royal houses among which succession to the throne rotates; between the higher and lower chiefs; between the holders of political and religious offices; between males and females. In chapters III, IV and V, he describes the system in operation. The rite of accession of a new ruler and the annual celebration of his kingship are discussed in chapter III. The myths, rites and festivals of the gods Oramfe and Ogun, who, each in different ways, legitimize the royal cult, are discussed in chapters IV and V. In chapter VI, he examines the now lapsed puberty rites for girls in order to shed light on the riddle of the 'central female focus' (155) in Ondo patrilineal society, and the cult of Aje, the goddess of wealth and fertility, by women. Olupona concludes his book with a sketch, in chapter VII, of the history of Christianity and Islam in Ondo society in the past century, and an interesting adaptation of Robin Horton's theory on micro-macro shift to the civil religion function of the cult of royalty in Ondo.

Olupona in his introduction (13-21), and David Westerlund in his preface (9-10), present this book as a model for the next generation of studies in African religions, and in most respects it deserves to be presented as such. The Christian theological bias of the Parrinder/Idowu/Mbiti generation²³ has been abandoned. Olupona follows Ray (1976) in combining 'phenomenological' with anthropological and historical methods of description and analysis and of abandoning comparative generalism in favour of ethnographic specificity. Olupona does not extrapolate from Ondo religion to African traditional religion, but just presents it for what it is: the cult of kingship in a particular Nigerian town. He analyses it at three levels: the descriptive one, the functional one, and the

'hermeneutical' one. The first two are, in my view, the sources of the virtues of this book; the third is its major weakness. Olupona terms the first level 'morphological phenomenology' (19). Its aim and operation are, however, identical with those of an anthropologist: to provide an accurate description of a symbol system from the point of view of 'the actors'. Empathy is required as much in an anthropologist's description of it as in that of a phenomenologist, and the anthropologist too must practise epoché. Both must investigate, at this descriptive, or morphological level, the influence of historical and contextual factors (e.g. ecology) on the form, or shape ('morphè'), of a cult. Its functions are analyzed at the second level. It is this type of research which anthropologists have pioneered and in which they have made the greatest advances. This level is crucial in Olupona's book. It enabled him to discover the civil religion function of Ondo rituals of royalty.

The third level is the 'hermeneutical' one, in the Eliadean tradition of 'creative, or total, hermeneutics' (Eliade 1999: 36, 57-71) with its stock of religionist concepts and its avowed intention to re-create and change modern man by the 'planétisation' (Eliade 1969: 69) of the culture of archaic man as the true *homo religiosus*. Olupona's functional analyses are thus 'complemented' by another type, such as the change in 'ontological' status (60) of the king-elect by his 'pilgrimage to the centre' (61). That ritual is said to be an 'archetype' and a 'divine model' (68), and therefore a 'primordial act' (69) by which the actors participate in a 'transcendental reality' (69). When the king walks around a tree thrice, he is said to circumambulate the *axis mundi* (69) and then to ascend 'the primeval mound' (69).²⁴

I have two problems with such exercises in Eliadean hermeneutics. One is that they are not supported by, or necessary at, either the descriptive or the functional levels of interpretation. They are creative. They present Olupona's spiritual interpretation of the descriptive data in the terms of the global Eliadean religion of *homo religiosus* as adhered by some modern liberal or post-christian university-trained religious elite. The other is that they will be welcomed in Ondo by certain intellectuals and some traditional believers as strengthening the position of Ondo traditional religion vis-à-vis its competitors on the religious market, and by the political establishment as a new legitimization of its civil religious function. It creates an additional prop under a colonial construction. Their interpretation as reenactment of primordial events (68, 70, 74, 76, 82, 93, 106, 107) seems to me to add religion to religion, and to interpret Ondo religion in a manner not unlike that of the earlier generation of West African scholars in Departments of Religious Studies.

I must explain why I think that Olupona's ethnographic data do not support his Eliadean interpretations. I am aware that it is presumptuous for me, who has no specialist knowledge in Ondo language, history, society and religion, to make strong claims in this matter. Still, the data presented in chapter V, on Ogun as anterior to Ondo immigration (112, 120), and Sonyinka's judgement that Ogun is the 'completion of Yoruba cosmogony', coupled to the fact that the cult of Oramfe in Ondo religion and politics is historically datable as later than the Ogun cult, seem to me not to allow the 'cosmization' interpretation which Olupona attributes to the Oramfe mythology and cult (107), and to kingship rituals in their trail (68, 70, 74, 76, 82). It is more consistent with the views of the Ondo believers, more safe and more adequate, in my view, to interpret the Oramfe cult as the mythology and legitimation of a post-primeval, historical event: the Ondo migration and the establishment of their political power in the Ondo region.

A few minor criticisms: the maps are too small and do not show all the relevant towns. It is a great pity that the photogrphahs have been printed four to a page. Chapters II and III are not fully synchronized in spelling and information: ch. III repeats information already presented in chapter II; kingship is said to rotate among five royal patrilineages (48) in ch. II, and among four (60) in ch. III; the highest rank of chiefs is spelled *Ehare* (44) in ch. II, and *Eghare* (60) in ch. III. Ch. III seems to have been written earlier and is more heavily Eliadean in perspective. Olupona might also consider whether he might replace the term 'magical' by 'miraculous' in some places and dispense with it altogether in others. 'Magical' introduces either a western, elitist or a co-believer bias that cannot be squared with the interpretations of the believers who perform or solicit these 'medico'-religious or other services.

Other programmatic statements, 1990-1992

The limits of this article forbid me to review in like manner other books that would qualify to be included after the criteria for this article. They are Michael Bourdillon's *Religion and society: a text for Africa* (1990)²⁵; Anil Sooklal's *Children of immortality* (1990)²⁶; Shirley Thorpe's *African traditional religions* (1991) and her *Primal religions worldwide* (1992)²⁷; John Cumpsty's *Religion as belonging* (1991)²⁸; David Chidester's *Religions of South Africa* (1992)²⁹; and James Cox's *Expressing the sacred* (1992).³⁰

In conclusion: the study of religions in a book-famished region

Poverty breeds isolation. Isolation and poor funding are disastrous for the academic enterprise. In most nations of Africa south of the Sahara,

universities struggle with severely curtailed budgets, too many students, and staff depleted because the salaries are so meagre, that they are either forced to take on additional jobs, to the detriment of academic work, or to find academic posts in richer nations. A severe book famine prevails. In the last few years, the budgets allocated to the libraries have been severely cut and the prices of books from the northern hemisphere have skyrocketed due to the constant depreciation of the currencies of the southern nations against those of the industrialized world. University libraries can buy only a tiny portion of books produced in the North and maintain subscriptions to only a few periodicals. As neither students nor lecturers can afford to buy the books produced in the West, the few books that have been bought by the libraries are not only in constant demand, but also keep 'disappearing' from the shelves, even after costly modern security systems have been installed.³¹

In this situation, two strategies seem necessary if the study of religions is to develop in a continent in which there is not only a great need of it, but in which it is also greatly in demand. First, it seems of paramount importance that books be locally produced, or imported from other nations with weak currencies. Books so produced or imported have become the mainstay of academic life. Import restrictions due to shortage of foreign currencies, poor distribution and advertising, and the weak buying power of the local market, however, severely limit the local publishing option for African scholars. It is, moreover, also necessary that African scholars publish in the international market for they have important contributions to make to global scholarship. But the books they publish abroad should also, and even first of all, become available to their own students and those in other African nations. The solution to this problem seems to be that the publishers who dominate the international market team up with publishers in Africa and enable them to produce editions in Africa at locally affordable prices. Through such ventures, other international publications may also be channelled into the African book market, thus counteracting the isolation and retardation which is bred by poverty. The newly founded AfASR and the other African IAHR affiliates should consider this as their most pressing assignment and solicit the assistance of the international community of scholars and publishers for devising effective solutions.

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¹ They might, more exceptionally, also be situated in Faculties of Education, because RE (Religious Education) is an examination subject and as such has an important place in secondary schools; or, very exceptionally, in Faculties of Social Science.

² For further details and nuances, cf. Hackett 1988, McKenzie 1989, Platvoet 1989, Prozesky 1990, and Platvoet, Cox & Olupona forthcoming.

³ Unisa is a correspondence university with over one hundred thousand student from all over Southern Africa. Its staff are predominantly *Afrikaans*-speaking Boers who teach mainly in English. Just as Unisa is, in type, numbers of students and recruitment region, the odd one out among the universities of South Africa, so is its Faculty of Theology special among the Boer institutions of its kind and in particular its large and prominent Missiology Department. In the early eighties, it had three full professors in 'missiology and the science of religion'. One chair was held by David Bosch. He was the missiologist proper. Another was occupied by the anthropologist Martinus Daneel, well-known for his excellent ethnographies of the Zion Christian Church and other indigenous Christian bodies of the Masvingo area of Zimbabwe. Kobus Krüger was since 1982 the third professor, specializing in 'science of religion'.

⁴ In 1986, when the Department for Science of Religion was heaved off from the Missiology Department, Krüger became its first professor and head. In 1992, the name of the department has been changed to Department of Religious Studies.

⁵ ASRSA was founded in 1979 and became an IAHR affiliate in 1980. Its periodical was *Religion in Southern Africa* from 1980 to 1987, and is named *Journal for the Study of Religion* (ISNN 1011-7601) since 1988.

⁶ The numbers between brackets refer to pagenumbers in the book that is being discussed.

⁷ See 30, 31, 32, 34, 66, 67, 69, 70, 72, 73, 76.

⁸ Cf. also 64: "Traditional science of religion has usually worked with an *intra-religious perspective*" (Krüger's italics). On 'religionism', cf. Platvoet 1990: 186, 191, 193-194.

⁹ Cf. also 16, 27-28, 34-35, 39, 44, 49 ('positivistic-neutral description [...] stem[s] from an attitude of aggressive debunking or condemnation, striking at the wrongs in any religion'), 57.

¹⁰ Krüger's other enemy; cf. also 22 on 'uncritical dogmatism' that is as 'unassailable as a tidal wave'; 27-28, and 45 on 'reified, absolutized religion' that has been 'allowed to become hardened into a chunk of thing-like solidity, forgetting that religion itself is the deposit in the field of human experience of a mystery lying radically beyond the religion itself'.

¹¹ See Platvoet 1990: 190-191.

¹² As is the field which it studies: preliterate religions. The fields which Krüger has studied, Christian and Buddhist scholastic thought, have moulded his manner of analysis and presentation.

¹³ Cf. e.g. Morris 1987.

¹⁴ For an other, generally appreciative review, cf. Ben Yosef 1986.

¹⁵ For some of his other publications, cf. Prozesky 1980, 1981, 1985, 1990a, 1990b, 1992, and de Gruchy & Prozesky 1991.

¹⁶ Mark that Prozesky does not write that these forces *are believed to manifest an imperceptible order of reality* (my italics). Mark also that that reality, though superior to the perceptible order, is not distinct from it; cf. 157 and below.

¹⁷ See also 146, 152, 153, 157, 190, 225-226, 228, 232, 233, 234, 235 for further statements on this 'unseen transcendent reality' (228) which he terms both a

'natural reality' (228), because it is part of our ordinary existence and not in need of an explanation in terms of a supernatural intervention or revelation (235), and a 'spiritual reality' (235).

¹⁸ Schleiermacher 1799/1879: 52, cited in Prozesky 1980: 76.

¹⁹ E.g. 118: 'where there is an effect, we may look for a cause'; see also 81, 157, 190, 225.

²⁰ I do not understand, nor agree with, his statement that 'those who accept the new, empirical approach to knowledge cannot deny that there *is* a spiritual reality quite different to physical existence without themselves departing from that approach' (214, my italics). I do agree that they cannot deny that there *may be* such a reality without being inconsistent.

²¹ For two other reviews, see Chidester 1985 and Lawson 1987.

²² See Olupona 1990 and Platvoet, Cox & Olupona forthcoming.

²³ See for criticism, Westerlund 1985 and Westerlund 1991, and my review of Westerlund 1985.

²⁴ See for other instances 70, 74, 76, 82, 92, 93, 106, 107, 121, 129, 146, 154.

²⁵ Bourdillon is Professor of Social Anthropology in the Department of Sociology in the University of Zimbabwe. He has done fieldwork among the Korekore-Shona of Zimbabwe and in the Calabar region of Nigeria. He is author of an authoritative ethnography of the Shona peoples (Bourdillon 1976/1987) and has edited books on Christianity south of the Zambezi (1977) and on sacrifice (Bourdillon & Fortes 1980).

²⁶ For a review, see Platvoet 1992. Dr. Anil Sooklal is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Hindu Studies in the University of Durban-Westville (South Africa) and Secretary of ASRSA.

²⁷ I have reviewed Thorpe's books in Platvoet forthcoming. Dr. Shirley Thorpe is, Lecturer in the Department of Science of Religion at UNISA.

²⁸ Cumpsty founded the Department of Religious Studies in the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Cape Town in 1969. He is Professor of Religious Studies.

²⁹ Chidester is Associate Professor in the Department of Religious Studies in the University of Cape Town and Director of its Institute for Comparative Religion in Southern Africa. He is noteworthy for his book on Jonestown (Chidester 1988) but has published five more books apart from these two.

³⁰ Cox was Lecturer in the Department of Religious Studies in the University of Zimbabwe from 1989 to early 1993. He is now a staff member of the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World in the University of Edinburgh.

³¹ This generalized picture is based on my experiences in Ghana in 1980 and before, and in Zimbabwe between 1985 and 1992, and on views aired by several participants in the IAHR regional conference on The Study of Religions in Africa that was held at the University of Zimbabwe in Harare from 15 to 19 September 1992. It seems representative of the universities of all the nations of Sub-Saharan Africa except South Africa's 'non-black' universities.

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A RESPONSE TO JAN PLATVOET

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Jan Platvoet's review article "Programmatic statements from Africa, 1982-1992" is a welcome contribution to the critical discussion of some of the work done over the last decade in the academic study of religion by scholars in Africa. As one of the three scholars whose work he selected for detailed attention, I am also personally gratified by his interest, not least because he ends by commending what he calls my "audacity to develop an all-encompassing, revolutionary argument" in my book *Religion and Ultimate Well-being: An Explanatory Theory* (London: Macmillan, and New York: St Martin's Press, 1984). However, in some important respects Platvoet's interpretation of the book is significantly at variance with what I intended to convey, so I am responding to his own suggestion to reply to his review article in the pages of *NUMEN*. I shall do so firstly by means of a brief summary of what I regard as the essential proposals contained in my book, and then by contesting what I regard as some problematic portrayals by Platvoet.

My theory holds that all religions are the product of human creativity alone, activated in response to unseen but, so far as I am concerned, *wholly natural* forces in the cosmos, in quest of supreme or ultimate well-being. While this is the theme of the entire book, it is also concisely summarized near the end in two places (pp. 228 and 234), and is therefore, I would have thought, clear and prominent enough to indicate my intentions, but perhaps this is not so for some readers.

Whether or not any spiritual entities of the kind believed in by the faithful exist or not, is not a question that can be settled by the phenomenological method. Therefore the book neither accepts nor rejects the believer's contention that such entities in fact exist. To maintain neutrality on this matter, I therefore used the terms "powers" and "forces" for the supposed spiritual entities invoked by believers, defining these terms as anything that produces an experienceable effect. All of this is made clear, I think, in various places throughout the book; see for example pp. 12, 13, 52, 97, 100, 101 etc. I thus consider that my theory, in this respect if not also in all others, maintains precisely the kind of scholarly neutrality extolled by Platvoet.

To have left matters there in the book struck me, however, as being too inconclusive. Therefore I proposed that—while still leaving the

metaphysical question of the existence or otherwise of alleged spiritual entities open—we should see to what extent the facts of religion could be explained by using as proposed causes only such factors as fall within ordinary, natural experience, and my conclusion is that religion can in fact be so explained. (See pp. 96-7, 156-7, 162, 174, 176, 191, 209). I called this approach an experiment in open-ended empiricism (p. 97). In short, I argued in that book that religion in all its forms is the product of nature alone, though I recognize that this conclusion is not itself tantamount to an endorsement of materialism (or whatever else we might call a world-view which rejects as false the belief that there are spiritual realities distinct in some way from physical existence).

With these points in mind I turn now to Platvoet's account of the book, where there are several main misunderstandings and a set of lesser ones. A wrong emphasis appears virtually at the beginning where Platvoet calls the book an exercise in religious and philosophical anthropology, quoting my own words out of context and omitting an important qualification of them. The word "religious" here no more means personal religious involvement than it does in the term "religious studies" as the name of an academic discipline, contrary to the interpretation Platvoet places on the book. And in addition to its focus on philosophical anthropology in relation to humanity's religious interests, the book is also an exercise in philosophical cosmology.

The most important of the main misunderstandings in Platvoet's article concerns his interpretation of the cosmological factor which I argue to be a necessary causal condition for the rise of religion, comprising the cluster of mostly unseen powers or forces at work in the cosmos and affecting humanity for good and ill in often unpredictable ways. As I explained above, my theory of religion holds that what we today would call purely natural cosmological forces which surpass all human resources (and are thus purely natural instances of transcendence), are enough to evoke the rise and diversification of religion among human beings, given also certain natural features of our human make-up plus contextual variation. Platvoet sees here a confusion of natural and supernatural forces. He thinks I fuse (and confuse) "empirical methodology with transempirical religionism" and end up with a philosophical theology which cannot be the empirical explanation of religion it sets out to be. Now I can accept that there are passages whose neutrality of expression, or whose ambiguity, might have given him this notion, but, as I have already demonstrated, the book has ample instances of what I would say are perfectly clear statements showing that I consider natural or mundane causes to be enough to explain religion. Here is just one example, in

which I say that we “do not need to posit objectively real spirits to account for the claim that some people have seen or heard them....” (176) So I have to say that Platvoet has attributed to the book an element of theologizing which is clearly disavowed in numerous key parts of the book, and was certainly the furthest thing from my intentions in writing it.

This misunderstanding leads to other problems. Platvoet surmises that the source of what he thinks is my blurring of the lines between empirical and theological interests is an alleged dependence on Schleiermacher. Here too I fear that he has got the wrong end of the stick. Certainly much of my earliest research was on Schleiermacher, and some of the latter’s key ideas influenced my work on the study of religions, for example his insistence that we must examine the deliverances of religious experience if we want to understand religion, his early metaphysical agnosticism, and the way (correctly, in my view) he centralized the theme of salvation or redemption among the concerns of Christians. But in working out a theory of religion I had nothing remotely like his own youthful calls for radical religious renewal in mind, least of all anything that smacked of supernaturalism. I must add in this context that I think Platvoet also misconstrues, and exaggerates, my criticisms of both fideism and positivism. Given my open-ended empirical approach, it is from these two polar extremes that the greatest resistance was logically to be expected: fideists opposing my naturalism and positivists my metaphysical open-endedness. For that reason I included my arguments against them, and not because I was campaigning as an “engaged reformer” for my supposedly religious interests. This philosophically warranted argumentative manoeuvre is however obscured by Platvoet’s worries about my supposedly taking a stance within religion.

More serious, however, than this attempted aetiology is Platvoet’s criticism that because I allegedly smuggle supernatural notions into my concept of the powers that evoke humanity’s religions, I therefore contradict my own methodological requirement of testability, which I derive from Popper. Since the interpretation underlying this particular criticism is unsound (because I do not infiltrate metaphysical affirmations into my definition of cosmic powers) this derivative objection loses its force. In any case, since I cite as the cosmological cause of religion only factors within the ordinary, natural experience of any human being, it is perfectly clear that they are in fact contrary to Platvoet’s suggestion, empirically testable. Experience, especially sustained, critically interrogated experience, is the way to do so. Once again, I must therefore respectfully but unambiguously reject Platvoet’s attribution of a theological component in my book.

As a result it is also quite incorrect to interpret me as a religious participant calling for a radical religious renewal. The parts of the book dealing with this matter (pp. 224-28) nowhere state that this is also my personal crusade. Religious radicalism is a fact of our times, and must be reflected in any theory of religion. Certainly I personally find the likes of Don Cupitt more appealing than television evangelists, but I have no personal involvement in their religious and ecclesiastical reforming projects.

The second of my two causal factors for explaining religion is sought in human nature as I understand it. Platvoet incorrectly presents this as human finitude. What the book says is that a cluster of basic human characteristics is involved: our desire for well-being, our anxious vulnerability and our creativity, as well as our finitude. Important though the latter is in my philosophical anthropology, it cannot stand on its own as Platvoet seems to think.

The minor inaccuracies can be quickly handled. My explanatory method is not simply an application of the deductive-nomological approach. I do not think that secularity is the graveyard of all religions; if I did, why on earth would I predict a resurgence of traditionalism in religion (pp. 217-220)? And thirdly, I fear that Platvoet has severely misread my treatment of what I call mythological naturalism. His allegation about its supposedly derogatory treatment of “animism” is simply impossible to square with what the book actually says, above all in the section on San religion on pp. 181ff.

My final point concerns what I regard as the most academically important question posed by Platvoet, viz. whether my proposed theory tries to explain too much and ends up explaining nothing. There is a significant issue here and it is a pity that Platvoet did not explore it further. The problem confronts any attempted general theory of religion such as mine, viz., if the theory succeeds in being general, can it avoid becoming vacuous? Is Platvoet asserting that there are no universally operative causal factors? If so, does he think the theory of gravity, for example, is vacuous? Is it possible to explain the whole set of religious phenomena in a single framework, as I have attempted? To my mind, the problem of over-generality is guarded against in the book by intentional exposure to empirical refutation, but would it not be the case that a valid, general theory of religion would be precisely one where all known data fit the theory? If so, does that make it vacuous? I am quite ready to accept evidence of religious phenomena that would contradict my theory and modify it accordingly, but Platvoet offers none, just as his objection to my use of a three-part division of the world’s religious formations (which I got from other scholars and did *not* devise to suit my needs, as he alleges) cites

unspecified, current scholarly "insights" rather than evidence from the field of religions. For the rest, however, I must commend him for providing an acceptable account of a complex argument, congratulate him for his admirable invitation to me to respond to it, and thank him for thereby providing an opportunity for some critical attention to be given to scholarly work done in Africa.

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BOOK REVIEWS

M.C. JĘDREJ and ROSALIND SHAW (Eds.), *Dreaming, religion and society in Africa*. Leiden: E.J. Brill 1992 (= Supplements to the Journal of Religion in Africa, 7), (194 p., bibliographies, index) ISBN 90-04-08936-5 (cloth) \$ 54.50.

Dreams have been a sorely neglected subject in the study of religions in Africa as well as worldwide in the last decades. In my recollection, Sylvia Thrupp's *Millennial dreams in action* (1970) was the last book to sport 'dreams' in its title—even though that collection of studies deals with millennialism and hardly with dreams. So, this book is to be hailed as a major event.

The book has ten contributions, an introduction, and a four page afterword by Roy Willis. This book is not on the feral dreams, those that are dreamt by every human but elude our memory. It is on the domesticated dreams: the few dreams that are not only recollected, but also recounted and brought into the social interaction of humans. So, it is not on the neurobiology and psychology of dreaming as a mental activity, but on the sociopsychological functions, the sociology and cultural morphology of the recounted dream. It studies the differential attention paid by societies, groups, and persons to dreams, the negotiation and manipulation of the meaning of recounted dreams—which are transformed in these processes—, and their use for explanation of other than routine behaviour or events, for the constitution of the 'self' of the members of a society, and for laying claim to privileged knowledge and to certain statuses.

The introduction has two parts. It first presents a survey of the dichotomous approaches to the ethnography of the dream in classical anthropology, based on an opposition between 'the primitives' and 'us' in respect of the use of dreams, and sets out the reasons for the poor attention to dreams in the ethnography of Africa in this century. In its second half, the 'polyphony' of theoretical approaches used by the contributors to this volume is discussed.

The first four articles emphasize various 'interactionist' perspectives. Pamela Reynolds discusses the role of dreams in the processes of individuation and socialisation among the Zezuru Shona of Zimbabwe, particularly of children and healers. Rosalind Shaw describes the complex cosmology of the Temne of Sierra Leone and its use for fame by Temne diviners through 'accomplished dreaming'. Keith Ray analyses the role

of vocational dreams in the selection of candidates for high ritual offices among the Northcentral Igbo of Nigeria. Roy Dilley shows that the Tukulor weavers of Senegal believe that they are given their designs, as well as other mystical and technical help, by the *jinn* connected with their craft in dreams, but also derive their low position in society from this cosmological connection, the *jinn* being held to be inferior as sources of 'knowledge' to Allah and his angels.

A second group of three contributions offers symbolist perspectives. Ladislav Holt analyses the semiotics, or rules of dream interpretation, of the Berti, a Muslim people on the borders of Sudan and Ethiopia. The Berti do not cultivate dream telling. The Yansi of Zaïre do: they begin each day by discussing their dreams, and may even discuss them at night, immediately after they have dreamt one. Mubuy Mubay Mpier discusses their semantics of dream interpretation and its application to daily life. M.C. Jędrex analyses dreams of ordinary people, those of the custodians of certain temples, and the role of a 'dream' cult group among the Ingessana of Sudan in a structuralist manner.

The last three contributions deal with dreaming in African Christianity. Peter McKenzie analyses the transformations and continuities of Yoruba dreaming in the nineteenth century under the influence of conversion to Christianity. Richard T. Curley's contribution is on conversion dreams, as gates to full membership, in an independent church in Cameroun. They offer public testimony of the church's ability to transform lives and express its collective consciousness as a community of elect. Lastly, Simon Charsley critically surveys the study of dream recounting in 'independent' churches. Even though in that part of African ethnography relatively much attention was paid to this research topic, the actual interest in dreams proves often to have been patchy and their use variable. For which use he proposes a new classification.

Some minor points of criticism. I for one would have been happy to have had the usual extra page of bio-bibliographical information on the contributors. More serious is the scarcity and, in the paper of Holt, the total lack of information on the whereabouts of the people to be discussed and other general information for the uninitiated. Only Willis, in his brief afterward, touches upon neurobiology, and thus upon the common human ground of dreaming. As the domesticated dream is the product not only of social interaction in the telling of a dream but also of the feral dream dreamt, and as the transition between states of association and dissociation is fluid and multiform, neurobiology does have important analyses to contribute to a scholarly understanding of this psycho-social phenomenon. Their incorporation would allow the study of dreams to be

linked to another neglected avenue of revelation, the vision, as well as to better studied ones, such as spirit possession and divination.

Lastly, the text is fully unhyphenated. As a result, words are widely strewn out over a line usually, with lots of white showing between them, when the next line begins with a long word. That is not what one expects from expensive Brill books.

It is hoped that the trails which Jędrej, Shaw and the others have blazed in this book will be trodden by others. If dreams and visions will receive as much scholarly attention as have spirit possession and, more recently, divination, the sorely neglected subject of 'revelation' may perhaps be in for fresh attention also.

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RICHARD GRAY, *Black Christians and White Missionaries*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press 1990 (VIII + 134 p.) ISBN 0 300 04910 2 £ 18.50 (cloth).

This book is commended to all students of the history of religions of Africa. It presents a succinct, well written overview of the development of Christianity in Africa. It stresses the role of Africans in that history. It brings one up to date with the latest research in this field, as much of it was carried out under the supervision of Gray who has recently retired as Professor of the History of Africa in the University of London. It is, however, commended with a reserve.

The book is in two parts, each preceded by an introduction. Part one presents in three chapters research by Gray into some episodes of the 17th century Roman Catholic mission history in Africa. Chapter one deals with the change of attitude towards the slave trade in the highest quarters in Rome in the 1680s which was brought about by a former Luso-Brazilian slave, Lourenço da Silva. Acting on behalf of confraternities of freed Blacks and Mulattos at Lisbon and Madrid such as "Our Lady Star of the Negroes", Da Silva in his petitions to the Pope forcefully opposed the perpetual slavery into which African Christians as well as their offspring were held. In doing so, he also exposed the cruelties of slavery and slave trade. A memorandum on the iniquities of the slave trade itself submitted to the Propaganda Fide in 1685 by Capuchin missionaries in Kongo and Angola clinched the matter and resulted in 1686 in a strong-

worded condemnation of the slave trade by the Holy Office. In chapter two, Gray explains why this condemnation remained ineffectual. Fra Girolamo, a leading Capuchin missionary in the Kongo, interpreted it as forbidding only the sale of Christian slaves to “heretics,” the traders from the Northwest European nations. In chapter three, Gray shows by a discussion of Fra Girolamo’s report on the Capuchin work in the neighbouring principality of Soyo that at least in that one area early R.C. mission resulted in a solid local Christianity. That result was achieved mainly through the instrument of again the confraternities. These were, however, not only instruments of christianisation but also of indigenizing Christianity in ways unpalatable to the Capuchin missionaries. Whereas these considered it perfectly just to have a Christian caught practising traditional religion sold “into slavery across the Atlantic” (48), many Soyo Christians felt free to incorporate “their vain observances” into their new religion. It made at least one Capuchin reflect and query the Propaganda Fide whether perhaps traditional rites for ancestors could not be permitted, for in them “they do not make an explicit, or implicit, pact with the devil, but have a simple faith.” The Propaganda Fide proved at that time not wholly unsympathetic to the suggestion.

I find these chapters the best part of the book. I have more reserves towards part II. In its introduction (59-78), Gray fights a battle on two fronts. One against traditional European missionary orthodoxy which sees syncretism and paganism everywhere in African Christianity. Another against social scientific interpretation of the massive conversion to the Christian religion in sub-Saharan Africa since 1870, particularly that of Horton. Against both, Gray takes a liberal christian, or “religionist”, view of that historical process. Against the first, he holds that the African appropriations of Christianity should be seen as “distinctive contributions to the universal church” (64) and accepted as legitimate “theological pluralism” (75) in a “confidence born of ecumenical encounters” (73). Against the second, he sides with H. Fisher by suggesting that Islam and Christianity were more than mere ready at hand solutions for the religious interpretation of modernization processes exonerating African believers from having to reshuffle their traditional religions in order to meet the cosmological demands of modern times. Horton overlooks “that the world religions have introduced completely new concepts to the African religious repertory” (64), e.g. on eschatology. These brought about “a cosmological revolution” (69) and in its train a host of millenarian movements. Horton’s intellectualist approach prevents him from seeing that Christianity met “at least some of the longstanding spiritual needs and demands of African societies” (84). In the process of meeting them, it became distinctively African.

Part two has two chapters. In chapter four, Gray stresses the independent financial resources of the modern (post 1800) mission enterprise, its relative independence from the colonial states and its great contribution to the communication, and especially to the literacy, revolution in modern Africa. In chapter five, he takes a position against anthropologists who stress the basic continuity in cosmology between traditional cults and most African christianities. He follows Sanneh in positing that the "Africans' tolerance of religious diversity and their inclusive view of community have provided a milieu for deep and vigorous interaction" with "the store of potent symbols" which the Bible and the Qur'an introduced into Africa. They enabled African Christians in as diverse groups as the Watchtower movements, the followers of Milingo and of Phrophet Harris to interpret witches as allies of Satan, baptism as protection against them, healing as the coming of the Kingdom, as well as to organise resistance against the oppressions of colonialism and, recently, of the modern African states (103-112). To Gray, the apotheosis of this cumulative tradition is the 1985 *Kairos Document* against apartheid (113-116). Here Gray clearly shows his reformist inspiration.

Gray's booklet is a pleasure to read. Its merit is that it presents an outline of a unified social history of Africa's many christianities. Its blemish is that Gray confuses secular history and liberal christian theology.

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